



# Geraint of Devon



Marion Lee Reynolds



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# GERAINT OF DEVON

BY  
MARION LEE REYNOLDS



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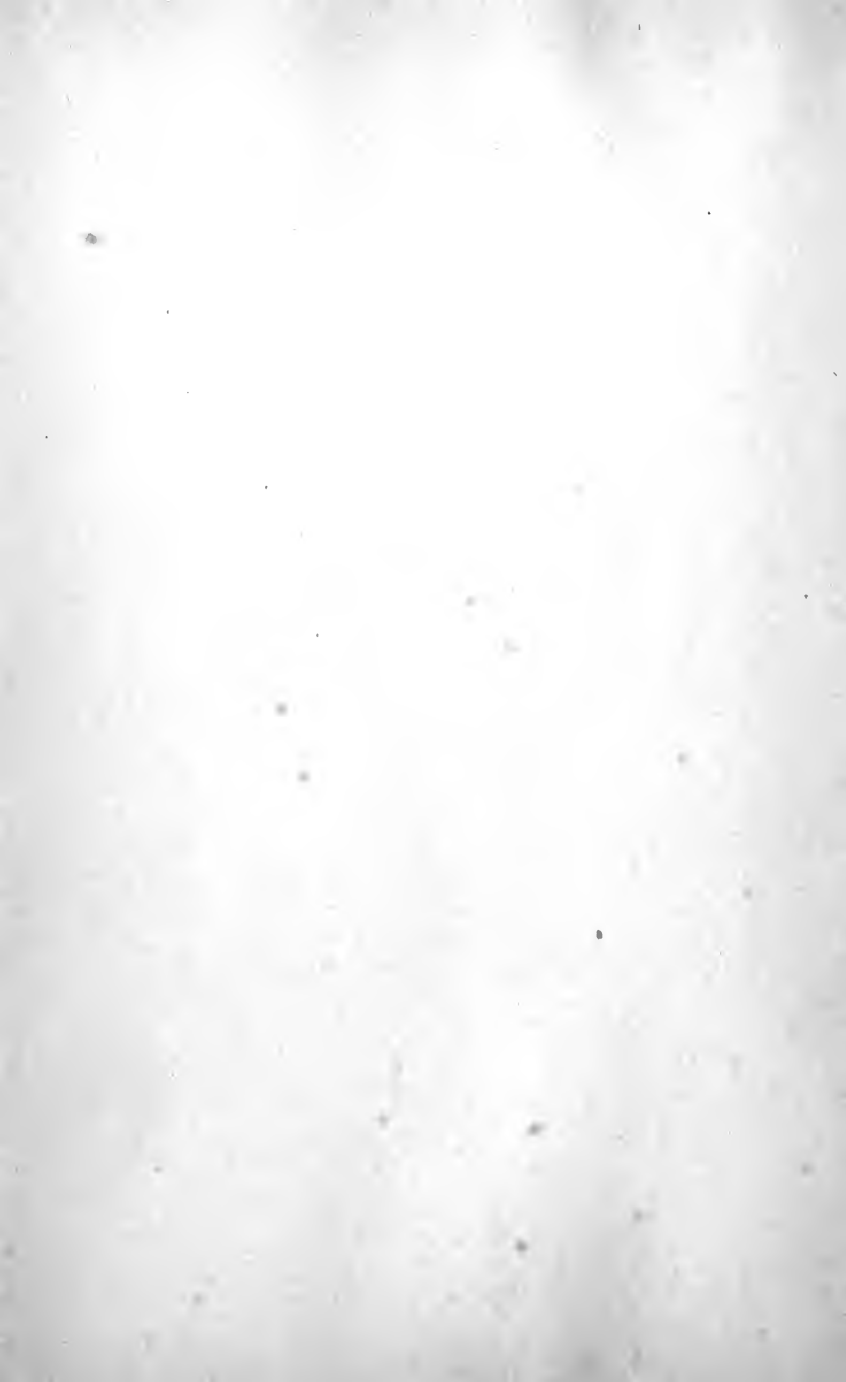
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TO  
J. B. F. R.

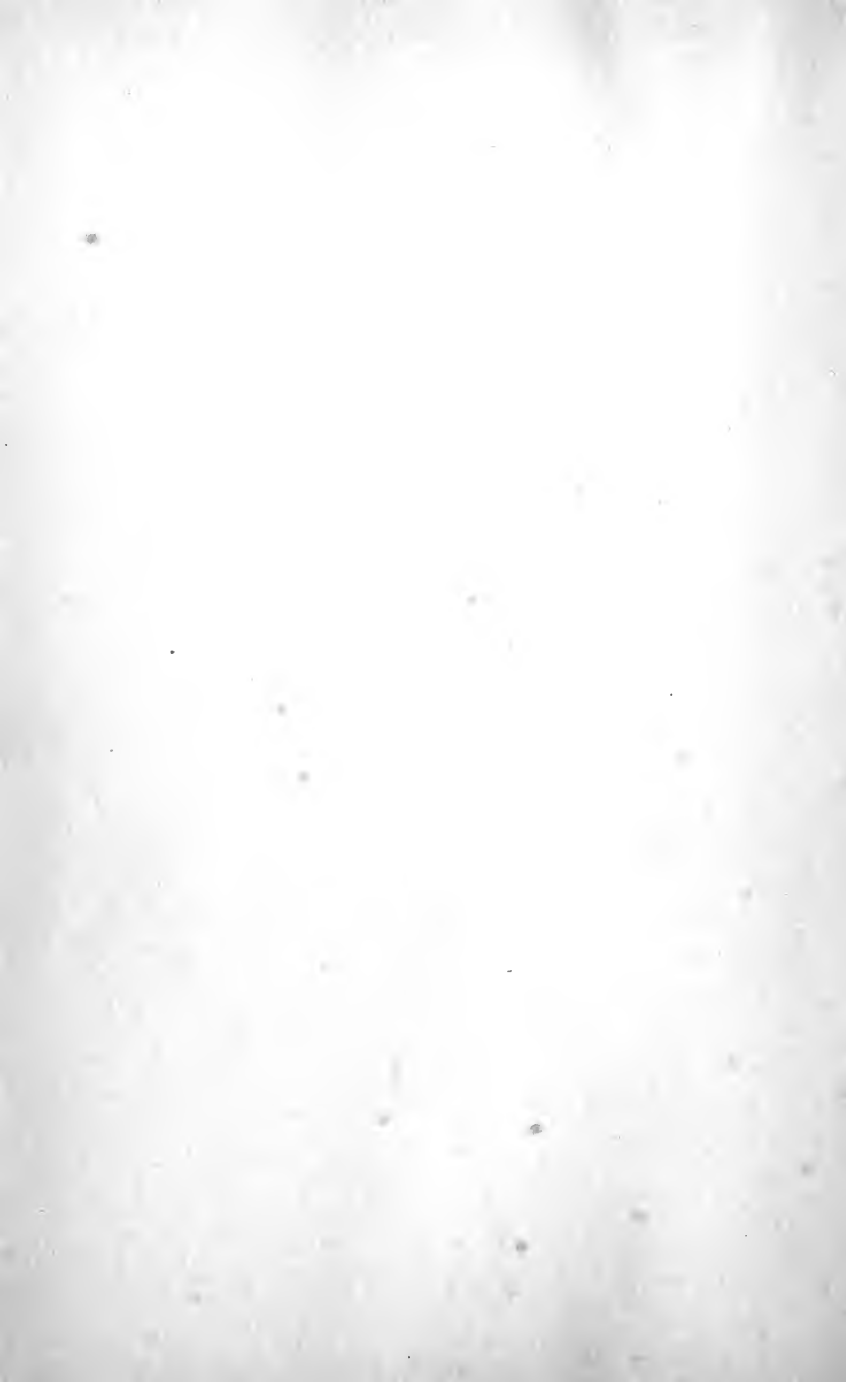


## FOREWORD

Gentles, I will to tell you a fair tale,  
Echoing from the Lands of Long Ago,  
Resonant to the Towers of Brave Romance —  
Romance, that stately region of old time,  
Wherein were truths in grand simplicities,  
Valiance and gentleness and constancy,  
And Beauty with a radiance on her brow,  
And Love, a spiritual lord through earthly life,  
Source of ideals past all attainment, high.

Luminous yet within a dreamer's dream  
Those lands endure; and if, as folk will say,  
They never were save in a dreamer's dream,  
What matter, when their light is glamour still,  
Their songs, a living music in the heart,  
Their visions, our own visions, glorified?  
And when, as to a refuge, to their halls,  
From deserts of world-weariness and pain,  
Fleeing, the dreamer enters and finds peace?

So do you put the shadows from *your* souls,  
Coming within the gates of Brave Romance.



## THE WINNING OF ENID



## I

ONCE it befell, upon a Whitsuntide,  
Arthur, the lord puissant, held his court  
At old Caerlleon, whose innumerable towers  
And labyrinthine palaces that still  
Renewed them in the broadening stream of Usk  
(Two cities, whereof either well might seem  
The more unreal, so near to Faerie, both),  
Were ancient even then. For alien hands  
Upreared them long ago, and alien tongues  
Spake through their silences, and alien loves  
Hallowed them with their presence; till the  
doom,  
Down-hurting from the wildness of the north,  
Drave all in rout and ruin from the land,  
And once again, the princes of the isle  
Held sovereignty within Caerlleon's halls,  
True sons of Britain, conquerors at the last.

Great was the court of Arthur, which he held  
In that young month of May. The noblest  
knights  
Of all the baronage, with their fair wives  
And daughters, were assembled; and nine kings  
Were thither come, from nine wide-spreading  
realms.

Throughout the Island of the Mighty — each  
In his demesne was paramount; yet they all  
Had homage done to Arthur, King of kings.

It was Whit-Tuesday night. The spacious hall  
Of banquet was ablaze with streaming flames  
Of torches in tall cressets wrought from gold,  
Of swinging golden lamps, the burning oils  
Whereof exhaled a cloud of spicery,  
Drifting like gossamer. And sweet the scent  
Of rushes and bruised blossoms on the floor,  
And bright the silver vessels and the gold,  
And the jewel-heavy hanaps, with the wine  
Darkling and glowing ruddily like a jewel.  
For Arthur and that fellowship which formed  
A symbol of the roundness of the world,  
A symbol of the circling wheel of time,  
A symbol of the ringed eternities —  
The Knighthood of the mystic Table Round —  
Held joyous festival; their revelry  
Rang to the shadowy rafters, so the flags,  
Suspended thence, rustled with silken swish,—  
Some, new, unstained, colourful and gay,  
Some, torn and tattered, maculate with blood;  
Some, Arthur's and his princes', but the most,  
Wrested from ruined kings on days of blood.

Presently from the daïs, satin-spread,  
Where sat Pendragon's son and Guenevere,



His Queen of regal loveliness, on thrones  
Carven of cypress-wood, arose the sound  
Of harp-strings touched to music. And a  
youth,  
Slender, dark-eyed, was he who smote the  
strings,  
Alarin named, of whom strange rumors were.  
For some men whispered he was elfin-born,  
Child of a faery mother, though earthly man,  
A good knight and a famous, fathered him.  
And folk told ever that the harp he played  
Was Taliessin's own, that he had sipped  
The cauldron of Caridwen,— ay, had heard  
Rhiannon's singing-birds. They said he knew  
What song the willow whispers to the stream  
When, in the eastern dark, the red moon hangs ;  
What chant the veiled spirits of the storm  
Lift in the hollow intervals of wind ;  
What dirge the daughters of the towering wave  
Intone for drowned men when the sullen surge  
Booms loudest on the cliffs of Britain's shore.  
Tales, foolish tales, perchance ; but this is sure :  
Well could he harp, well could he make the lay,  
And sitting on the step to Arthur's throne,  
He sang the love of Astrild and Locryn,  
And their love-dolour, with a little song  
He called The King's Farewell, and it was this :

“ Before me is a gathering of spears,

Before me is the frothing flood of Stour,—  
Behind me is delight through seven years.

“ Dear, on this day in battle I shall die;  
What will they do to thee when I am slain?  
What will they say to thee when mute I lie?

“ If they cry, ‘ Sin,’ remember Love is great;  
If they jeer, ‘ Shame,’ remember Love is lord;  
To live in him is no dishonoured state.

“ And if they bring thee to the two-edged sword,  
Be not quite comfortless amidst their hate,—  
‘ We loved so very well ’ be thy last word.

“ O face, for love of me so grey with pain  
To see thee but once more how glad were I!  
The haven of thy smile but once to gain! —

“ Dear, it is come! The trumpets shrill the hour!  
Behind me is delight through seven years,—  
Before me is the frothing flood of Stour.”

Then they who held such joyance in the hall,  
When he had sung, were silent a brief space,  
Thinking of those two lovers of old time.  
And in the heart of Guenevere was a woe.  
For never could word or song be made of love,  
But she must think of Lancelot, and the days  
To be, of waste and rasure — menacing days,  
Certain past all prevention.

But behold,  
 The dragon-sculptured doors at the hall's end  
 Opening with a rush of cool night air,  
 Scented with May, a youth in hunting-green,  
 Entered, and bent the knee at Arthur's throne,  
 And told how in the royal Wood of Dean,  
 Wherein was he a forester, had appeared  
 A wonderful white stag, than one night's snow  
 On yesterday's green field, whiter by far.  
 And Arthur bade a hunting be proclaimed  
 Even for the morrow's dawning, and when the  
 Queen  
 Sought his permission to attend the chase,  
 Accorded it willingly.

So when the dawn  
 Glimmered through court and hall, Arthur  
 arose,  
 And all his nobles, and young pages deft  
 Arrayed them for the hunt; and joyously,  
 While yet the Severn-mists lay in the south,  
 With tuneful winding of gay hunting-horns,  
 With deep-voiced baying of lithe, leashed  
 hounds,  
 Champing of coursers, ring of golden spurs,  
 They galloped forth unto the Wood of Dean.

But in her silken chamber, Guenevere  
 Slept still, rapt deep in dreams. So grew the  
 day,

And through the painted casements of the room,  
The sunlight filtered, coloured violet,  
Green, vermeil, azure; and one slender shaft,  
Slantingly golden, streaming on the bed's  
Fine ivory and white cypress, crept upon  
The purple counterpane, whose broidered kings  
Glinted to life. And higher stole the beam  
Among the golden arabesques and flowers —  
Wrought by sweet ladies, fair and long since  
dead —

Until it lay like something magical  
On the sleeping Queen's white throat,— a touch  
so soft

And warm that in her dream the sleeper smiled;  
And gliding even higher, fell at last  
Full on her eyelids. Guenevere awoke  
To marvel at the lateness of the hour,  
And summon her maidens. Swiftly was she  
robed

In folds of emerald samite, girdled close  
With a broad belt of gold, mantle and hood  
Of crimson, sewn with gems, and lined through-  
out

With sendal, white and fine. So, freshly fair  
As a spring rose first blossomed with the morn,  
She mounted her fleet palfrey, and in haste,  
With two white-breasted greyhounds, freed from  
leash,

Darting like swallows to her right and left,

With but a single damsel in attend,  
Rode from Caerlleon's gateway, forded Usk,  
And followed the broad trail of trodden grass  
Left by the huntsmen.

As the Queen approached  
The confines of the forest, the sharp beat  
Of hoofs rang out behind her, and she turned,  
And following on a hunter foal of bay,  
Stately and proud, she saw a knightly youth  
Who drew near swiftly, and a prince was he  
In comeliness and bearing, tall and straight,  
Fair-haired, grey-eyed. And gaily was he clad  
In lustrous, yellow satins, deeply bright  
As with a woven sunshine; at his thigh  
A golden-hilted sword hung in a sheath  
Of patterned cordovan; of ivory  
His hunting-horn was carved and wrought with  
gold,  
And from his shoulders floated on the breeze  
A scarf of purple silk, the corners caught,  
Each, with a golden apple.

And the youth  
Riding unto the Queen, saluted her,  
Whereto she answered smilingly: "So late,  
My lord Geraint, thou comest, even as I!  
By this hour will the chase be well advanced,  
And if we go to yonder rise of ground,

Which overlooks the forest, we shall hear,  
Plainly, I think, the chime of hound and horn,  
And mayhap see the passing of the hunt.”  
And they rode up the knoll and waited there.

But while they hearkened to the far-off shouts  
Of huntsmen, and the crying of the dogs,  
And the thin, distance-broken bugle-calls,  
Lo, mounted on a hackney, from the wood  
A frightful dwarf came riding, in one hand  
Holding a knotted scourge. Behind the dwarf,  
Upon a palfrey, white and spirited,  
Rode a fair woman gowned in gold brocade,  
And following her, upon a huge destrier,  
A mail-clad knight was seen, his lance in rest,  
Slung from his neck a massive, dark-red shield,  
Bearing a silver griffon. And the knight  
Was of so mighty a stature that few men  
Could equal him in body, and his mien  
Was resolute, and in his countenance  
A pride illimitable was manifest;  
And manifest, strong passions gratified  
Too easily and too recklessly, by a force  
Of character powerful but gone astray,  
That so his youthfulness and comeliness  
Were well-nigh devestate.

Lightly the three  
Approached the hillock, and Queen Guenevere

Much marveled at the great size of the knight,  
 And she said to Geraint, "Who is yon man?"  
 "I know not," he made answer. Then the  
 Queen

Addressed her damsel, telling her to go  
 And of the dwarf enquire his master's name.  
 This did she do with all of courtesy,  
 Adding, "It is our gracious Queen who asks,  
 Speaking through me." Whereat the hideous  
 dwarf

Twisted his wide mouth to an evil grin,  
 But said no word. Thereon the maiden turned  
 Her horse's head towards the knight himself,  
 Thinking to speak with him, but instantly  
 The dwarf struck with his scourge, and though  
 in time

She flung her arm up to protect her face,  
 The blow fell full upon her gloveless hand,  
 Making great, livid bruises, and she came  
 Moaning to Guenevere.

Then sorrowfully

And wrathfully said Geraint: "Pity of God!  
 That he should strike her thus, and that the  
 knight  
 Make not a move to punish him! I will go,  
 Myself, and ask the name." And he rode forth,  
 And sternly charged the dwarf discover it,

But mockingly was he answered, "My lord's  
name

I will not tell to one of thy degree!"

Then Geraint turned his horse towards the  
knight,

But the dwarf screamed, "Thou shalt not speak  
with him!"

And he raised high the scourge and smote  
Geraint

Hard on the neck that all the flesh was bruised  
And striped of the scourge-lashes. And Geraint

Put hand to hilt, minded to slay the dwarf  
In just avengement, but bethought him swift  
It were poor vengeance but to slay the slave,  
Punishing not the master; and unarmed,  
How match his silken coat with the knight's  
mail?

So he resheathed his sword and galloped back  
To take leave of the Queen.

"Grieve not, my prince,"  
Said Guenevere, "thine was the worthier way.  
Blind rage had not been valour." But Geraint,  
The slow blood oozing darkly from the wounds  
And colouring the purple scarf he wore,  
Responded: "Lady, I crave thy sovran leave  
To follow yon knight of the griffon-shield,  
Whose pride I measure by his monster's words,



Wherever he may go, until perchance,  
For pledge or loan, I may procure me arms  
And challenge him, and in his blood blot out  
The insult he hath suffered to be placed  
Upon thy dignity, thy maid and me.”  
“Go!” said the Queen, “But, cousin, guard  
thyself;

For truly there is not a goodlier knight  
Than thou in all the court — ay, in the land —  
Nor one more dear to Arthur. And return  
In all the haste thou canst.” “I shall return  
When we are well avenged. Lady, farewell!”  
And clapping golden spurs to his bay steed,  
He flashed away down the sun-flooded road,  
Where, in the farther distance, went the dwarf,  
The lady, and the knight.

And with one hand  
Shading her eyes against the sun, the Queen  
Kept watch, until a winding of the way  
Hid him from view. Then, careless of the hunt,  
She called her hounds, and musingly and slow,  
To old Caerlleon’s palace came again.

## II

ALL through that day the company of three  
Unrestingly rode onward, and Geraint,  
Persistent as their shadows, followed still.  
Often they journeyed in broad forest-lands,  
Deep, cool, and very grateful; and sometimes  
Across wide meadows, where the flower-starred

grass

Billowed before the breeze; and yet again  
By fields of tillage, where the peasant-folk  
Gaped after them, awe-stricken, telling tales,  
Either to other, of the wondrous court  
Now at Caerlleon met, and of the King.  
By broad highway, and now by bridle-path,  
But ever on and onward did they fare,  
Till, in the falling dusk, Geraint beheld  
Pale, clustered lights before him, and rejoiced,  
Thinking to find a hamlet there, and arms;  
But found instead a priory, nestled close  
Against the foremost of a range of hills.  
Thereinto passed the company of three,  
And lodged them; and therein passed Prince  
Geraint,

And had right courteous treatment, but of arms  
Were none within the house of quiet life.  
And in the dawning, from the priory,

Went forth the dwarf, the lady, and the knight,  
And Geraint followed them.

This second day

They journeyed in the shadow of the hills,  
Between whose giant folds the dust-wan road  
Turned and re-turned, like a wild, hunted thing,  
Twisting and winding, doubling on itself,  
But fleeing ever onward. So Geraint,  
Watching the sun slope down the western sky  
And the hills grow in umbre, thought the quest  
Had never end, and many times desired  
His own green shield of eagle-blazonry,  
His own good lance and hauberk. And his mind  
Was filled with fancies touching on the three  
Who rode before him, and he saw the dwarf  
Turn once and gaze upon him and fall back  
As he would speak with him, but haughtily  
The master, interposing, signed him go  
To his place in the forefront. But at length,  
After a toilsome climb to a sharp height,  
The prince saw that which gladdened him,— a  
vale,  
Extending beyond eye-cast, fair and wide,  
Of various verdancy, the eastern slope  
Immersed in sunshine, while the western half  
Already gloomed in shadow. A rich town  
Lay in the valley, with long, glistening streets,  
And red-roofed houses, gabled and matchecold;

And at the town's extremity, on a crest  
Commanding all the country, rose the towers  
And bastions of a fortress, all agleam  
With the strong sunlight splintering on the  
    blades  
And steely helmets of the men-at-arms  
Who thronged the walls.

Seeing all this, Geraint  
Thought he had never seen a fairer town,  
Richer or nobler, to whatever lord  
It might belong; so thinking, took his way  
Adown the rocky hill-fall, following fast  
His quarry through the open city-gates,  
And up the thoroughfare. Filled was the street  
With a great press of people — knights in mail,  
Ladies with hawk on wrist, stout serving-men,  
Pages with messages. Allwhere was heard  
Clangor of iron, and ring of tempered steel,  
Blast of the bellows, hammering at the forge,  
Hissing of red-hot metal; at every door  
Horses were shod, swords burnished, armour  
    washed,  
In bustling preparation. But all ceased  
Their labor or their pleasure, when the knight,  
With lady and dwarf, rode up the teeming  
    street;  
And all gave place before him, and with shouts  
Of greeting and adulation welcomed him —

Some with "All hail!" and some with "Welcome, lord!"

While others cried, "What knight is like to thee,  
Knight of the Sparrow-hawk?" Thus he progressed,

As with a conqueror's triumph, the full length  
Of that long street, and conqueror-like, his  
mien,

Lordly and orgulous, and passed anon

With his companions through the massive gates  
Of that high fortress, whence, above the crash  
Of ponderous bolts to-driven heavily,

Thundered the warders' welcome, "Hail! All  
hail!"

Whereat Geraint, standing a little way

Apart, with satisfaction sighed and thought:

"So! This is very well! At last I trail  
Yon insolent to his hold!" Then turned to  
seek

Some lodgment for the night, but everywhere

Found only crowded inns, and hostelries

Already overflowing, and no one,

For charity or gold, would harbour him;

And when he asked the reason — what had  
drawn

The entire country-side into the town —

Men looked at him in wonder and exclaimed:

“Hear what he asks! Fair sir, what should it  
be  
Saving the Sparrow-hawk?” Wherefore the  
prince,  
With something of wrath for their discourtesy,  
But more of scorn, and with much weariness  
From his long ride, turned from the populous  
ways  
And districts of the city, letting his horse  
Choose his own way, not knowing where he went,  
Not caring, where all was strange; and by a  
lane,  
Sideling and unfrequented, chanced to come  
To the deserted outskirts.

There he saw  
A brook in a deep gorge, whose sloping banks,  
Long left attentionless, were overgrown  
With coarse, luxuriant weeds; and the loose soil  
Had slid in many places, so it lay  
Almost athwart the channel, that the stream,  
With low, complainful murmur, frothily  
Poured through the cramping passage, to lose  
itself  
Among the tufted beds of water-grass,  
Sharp-bladed, rankly growing. A bridge  
spanned  
The narrow slake; of finest marble-stone  
Had it been builded, but the frost and heat

Of years had wrought a change,— seamed,  
    cracked it was,  
Dark-blotched with spongy moss.

A ruined hall  
Stood on the farther side,— one great square  
    tower

With four outflanking turrets. But of these,  
Two had been crumbled in an ancient war,  
And lay two heaps of mortar and of stone,  
Rounded with wash of rain and drift of sand;  
A third was roofless, and its parapet  
Tottered in mouldering sections; and but one  
Seemed serviceable still, like the main tower  
Grey with grey lichens, scarred with old as-  
    saunts,

And blackened with the smoke of battles done.  
Yet Prince Geraint, letting his gaze traverse  
From sunken roof to sunken corner-stone,  
Mused how a potent charm enveloped all,  
Though ruinous,— yea, even thought perchance  
The ruin in its ruin held the charm —  
That unreal, veil-like beauty which the past  
Weaves of its phantoms, with fair, phantom  
    hands

Its monuments overspreading — a dim cloud,  
Intangible and golden, tenuous  
And light and subtle, with the sunset-glow,  
Redly behind; as now, behind the hall,

The west was red, while, in the evening breeze,  
The dark-green banners of the ivy, flung  
Like pennons of proud warriors from the  
    breached  
And broken battlements, waved wide their folds  
In sinuous triumph; honeysuckle-sprays,  
White-yellow with new bloom, dripped from the  
    eaves,  
And from the matted, interlacing screen  
Of twisted, gnarléd branches, came the soft,  
Low, slumberous, half-querulous twittering  
Of sleepy swallows.

    Dreamful was the scene,  
With such a mellow restfulness suffused,  
Of such a calm simplicity, that the prince,  
With the dusk's fragrant fingers at his heart,  
Forgot the wreckage of the fallen towers,  
Forgot the waste of fire and battering-ram,  
Forgot all save the swaying ivy-boughs,  
The gilding of the sunset, and the small,  
Sleep-quavering bird-notes. "Surely here is  
    peace,"  
Thought Prince Geraint, and that he spake  
    aloud  
Knew not, until in bitter echoing,  
A voice close to him answered, "Surely, peace!  
Peace red with ruin, with foul deeds defouled!  
Not peace of honour and security,



But peace of ravishment and injury —  
Such peace as the sword leaves and the strong  
hand —  
The peace of desolation!”

Then Geraint,  
Roused from his waking dream, beheld how one  
Had come the lane behind him, and now stood  
Upon the bridge. A man of many years  
He seemed, but something worse than flight of  
time  
Had aged him all too quickly, brought the stoop  
To his once stately figure, and the white  
To his loose, heavy hair. And poorly clad  
He was in an old, faded satin robe,  
Much-mended. Yet, despite his mean array,  
An air of gentle birth distinguished him;  
Upon him was the dignity of rank,  
Inbred and ineffaceable. And he looked  
Now at the ruined hall, now at Geraint,  
And smiled with a great bitterness, and he said:  
“Behold, my lord, the earldom of an earl —  
Ivy and fallen towers and tottering walls! —  
And even these on sufferance!” And the prince  
Was stirred with a strong pity for this man,  
And knew not what to do nor what to say  
To lighten his despair. But presently,  
In a changed tone, the other spake again:  
“And yet, fair youth, if lodging thou hast none,

Come, lodge with me to-night. If poor the cheer,  
Full hearty is the welcoming, at least.

My name is Lyconal; men call me earl;

And earl I was in sooth, upon a time."

"My lord," replied Geraint, "I give thee  
thanks;

Most gladly will I come."

Whereat the earl  
Conducted him across the mouldering bridge,  
Up a steep path, into a small, square court,  
Between whose sunken flags the wild grass grew;  
While everywhere the ancient walls of stone  
Seemed soft as velvet in their tapestry  
Of all-concealing ivy. Here the prince  
Unsaddled his spent horse. Then suddenly,  
Ere he could follow where his host would lead,  
Down through the silence, from the upper hall,  
A maiden sang, and marvelous her voice!  
So sweet, that floating downward from above  
So clearly sweet, it seemed an elfin strain  
From out the coloured splendors of the west —  
A music from the sunset, disembodied,  
Pure melody — the full, high, soaring notes  
Sprung from the fieriest auréolin  
That tipped the deepening crimson of the  
clouds;  
The low, rich tones from the slow-shadowing  
dusk's

Flower-scented violet. And still Geraint  
Thought ever, "Is it faery? Is it real?  
Oh, never voice so magical were real!"  
And all the wonder shone within his eyes.  
Earl Lyconal, with understanding smile,  
Waited in kindly patience, whispering,  
"My daughter, Enid."

The song Enid sang  
Was an old, whimsical, half-magic rhyme  
Anent the Summer-fountain, and the fay  
Who knelt thereby with death between her lips:

"There is a fount in faery lands  
Where stream of summer hath its rise;  
A maiden, not with mortal eyes,  
Kneels by the fountain, with both hands  
Clasping a windflower-twinéd cup,  
Wherewith she dips the summer up.

"A knight spurred out of the wide wood;  
The sun glanced on his falchion bright,  
And on his surcoat, all bedight  
With broidered Grails, since for the Good

"He labored, nor must stop nor stay  
From winning ever on the Quest  
Whose sweet sign glimmered on his breast —  
He saw the maiden by the way.

"He caught the gold glint of her hair,  
He saw the white curve of her throat;

And all her slenderness did note;  
And how the summer bubbled there

“Over her glistening finger-tips,—  
And like a spirit, died unshriven,  
Had he ten souls, he must have given  
Them all, but once to touch her lips!

“He felt the heart within him shrink  
At the long clinging of her kiss;  
He knew that very surely this  
Was death, yet only could he think

“How, sweeter still, her mouth was sweet  
Past all belief, and none could tell  
The glamour of her face — and fell  
Among the flowerets at her feet.

“She gave him neither look nor smile,  
She gave him neither smile nor sigh;  
Nor ever paled to see him die,  
Nor ever glanced at him, the while  
She knelt, with windflower-twinéd cup,  
Dipping the stream of summer up.”

So ceased the song; yet still the music seemed  
To ripple in long waves across the court,  
As water ripples, when the willow drops  
A leaf in the still pool. And Prince Geraint,  
Half-saddened by the fancy of the lay,  
Wherein Love's sum was Death, but all the more  
Desirous of the sight of her who sang,

Signed to his host, who wordless, led him  
straight,  
In the still-singing silence, through the hall's  
Dark, unused, lower chamber, up a stair  
Built in the thickness of the masonry,  
Into the upper hall.

Two women sat  
Therein at broidery-frames. And like the  
earl's,  
Their garb was ancient satin, lusterless,  
Thin-worn and frayed. Of these twain, one was  
old,  
And like the satin, faded; yet the prince,  
Marking the strength, the high serenity,  
The perfectness of peace on the old face,  
Whereto much suffering, met with fortitude,  
Had given a pale glory, like a saint's  
Dim, lambent aureole, thought in her youth  
She must have been the fairest woman known,  
The stateliest. And one was but a maid,  
Gold-haired, brown-eyed, the colour in her cheek  
Soft like the sunset-colour, and her brow  
And throat and fingers white as lily-flowers  
Sprayed by a crystal fountain.

And Geraint  
Bethought him of the fair of olden days;  
Those ladies, whose bright presences lend charm  
And witchery all-potent to the past;

Those ladies, delicately belle and young,  
Young always and belle always, in despite  
Of Death's dry grasp and Time's too restless  
sand,

Whose beauty can not die, nor age, nor wane  
Below perfection; crowned with amaranths,  
Their luminous faces, shining stilly-fair  
In circumambient darkness, draw for aye  
Our dreaming and our longing to a time  
Not in reality more grand than ours,  
Perchance, but in its semblant grander far,  
For thereon lies enchantment. So he thought  
Of Bronwen, the white-bosomed, for the sake  
Of whose sheer whiteness many a hero spilt  
The best blood of his heart, until for woe,  
Her own heart brake in twain, and now she  
sleeps

Always on Alaw-bank; of Arianrod,  
Don's silver-circled daughter, whose star-throne,  
A splendor in the roof of summer nights,  
Is but a hint of what her radiance was  
When she was mortal; of the Flower-devised,  
That magic lady of the meadow-sweet  
And the oak-blossom, fragile as the blooms  
Whereof she was enfashioned for a bride;  
And last of all, he lingered at that maid  
Of soul serene, Olwen, the pure of heart,  
So whitely exquisite, her beauty passed  
Into a proverb, that a man would say

In speaking of his love, "Lo, she is fair,  
Graceful as Olwen, at whose every step  
Four white trefoils upsprang!"

But as his thought  
Touched lightly on each glowing, golden name  
Wherewith the eld is glowing, his heart spake  
Ever to him of Enid: "Fair is she,  
Past any maid of magic or romance!  
Her soul is clearer than the first hour's dew,  
Her face is as a flower in a waste land!"

And with a perfect knowledging he knew  
He loved her with the strength of his whole  
life —

With all his manliness and knightliness  
He loved her, and would love her to the end  
And summing of his days, whatever she  
Might have for him,— love or indifference  
Or worse, if worse might be.

But Lyconal,  
Undreaming of the emotion of the prince,  
Addressed his daughter gently: "Child, go  
thou

Into the town and quickly bring to us  
The best of food and liquor thou canst find,  
To make our cheer the greater." And she rose,  
Slender and garbed in white, and when she came  
Into the court, a honeysuckle-branch,  
Low-swinging, touched her cheek, and feverishly

She pressed the cool leaves to her, in a strange,  
And strangely sweet, confusion; while Geraint,  
Within the hall, thought how the shadows closed  
Sullenly in, how all the brightness went  
With her, the source of brightness. Yet the fire  
In the wide-hearthéd chimney roared and flamed,  
And streamerwise the ruddy light-flood played  
Upon the antique stonework of the walls,  
Or gathered in patched pools upon the floor,  
Of such apparent density they seemed  
Splashings of amber liquid. Of all this  
The prince was heedless; still, in fantasy,  
He heard one strain of faery melody,  
He saw one image rarely delicate;  
And as sometimes, the burden of a song,  
Heard once, in lingering recurrences  
Runs through the mind, almost unconsciously  
Again repeating those same cadences,  
In such refrain his heart's words sang to him —  
“ Her face is as a flower in a waste land ! ”

Seeing their guest's abstraction, Lyconal  
And his good countess courteously forbore  
To question him about his journeying,  
But waited silently, until, ere long,  
Enid returned, with her a stalwart youth,  
Bearing a costrel, filled with bread and meat  
And flagoned wine. And the earl bade the  
youth



Care for the prince's horse, and went himself  
To see all done. And Enid laid the board,  
And when all was prepared, they sat them down,  
The sweet-faced countess at Geraint's right  
hand,

Earl Lyconal, at the left. And Enid stood  
And served them with a graceful dignity  
That made the task ennobled, and Geraint,  
Watching her with a love-illuminated gaze,  
Knew she was fairer in the ancient vest  
Of worn, white satin than ever Beale Isoud —  
In whose smile Tristram had his paradise —  
Ay, or Queen Guenevere, in richest robes  
Of sendals and of samites stitched with jewels.

Then, the meal finished, from the room retired  
Mother and daughter, and Sir Lyconal  
Refilled the prince's goblet and his own;  
And so they mused a space and sipped the wine  
And watched the flickering fire-forms, and  
Geraint

Could think of Enid only; till, by chance,  
With start of recollection, and a sense  
Of guilt for his forgetfulness, the prince  
Remembered him his quest — why he was come,  
What labor lay before him — and aroused  
Himself from reverie, and said, "Fair earl,  
To whom belongs the fortress, by its towers  
Dominating the valley?" But the earl

Tarried in answering; over his face  
A visible shadow crept, that all the light  
And genial warmth of hospitality  
Merged in a deep despair, and when he spake,  
His words were slow with pain: "To me, of  
right,  
It does belong; I built it, it was mine,  
And all the great, wide earldom." "Ah, fair  
sir,"  
Queried Geraint in sorrow, "what befell  
To strip thee of such riches?"

"Hearken, then,"

Said Lyconal, "if thou wouldst learn the tale.  
I tell it well, seeing that I have told  
It over to myself so many times —  
How many times! I had a brother once,  
Twin-born with me, less brother and more friend,  
So one in soul we twain. And in a joust  
My brother was sore wounded, that he knew  
His death was near; wherefore he sent for me:  
'Brother, I die, yet grieve I not for that.  
This is my grief: Eddern, my stripling son,  
Soon fatherless as well as motherless —  
What will betide him? Therefore, Lyconal,  
True brother and true friend, be thou to him  
A second father, be his guardian,  
Befriend him, counsel him, as thine own son  
Have ward of his estate, lest in the swift,

Hot rashness of his youth, he squander all  
And beggar him. Brother, to do all this  
Pledge me thy word!' I pledged it, and he died.

"Thus came into my house my brother's son,  
Eddern, scarce more than boy, whom well I  
loved

Both for his father's sake and for his own.  
For he was comely — yea, and even now  
Hath certain claim to fairness, though much  
marred

By long, most shameless license — and alert,  
Quick-witted, active-bodied, swift to learn,  
Swifter to put in practice; yet alway  
Heady, too proud, reckless of all control,  
And sometimes cruel — faults which indulgently  
I charged upon his youth, telling myself  
Time would mend all. But time did not amend.  
For, as the years sped by, his orgule waxed  
And ripened into insolence; still more  
He set at naught my counsel; nay, far worse,  
Allied himself with wild companions,  
Plunged in excesses,— he, outstripping all  
In profligacy and prodigality,  
Free liver and free lover. And when I,  
Ruefully watching this my brother's son  
Upon our name bring tarnishment, essayed  
To check his imminent ruin, loud he spake  
Against me, saying, 'Now that I am man,

Give to me mine estate!’ Whereat I told  
Him all his father said before he died,  
Adding, ‘Reform thee, nephew, and I will  
Render thee every farthing; otherwise,  
I can not and be faithful to my trust.’

“Which plunged him into such a furious rage,  
He stormed me like a madman, threatening  
Revengement dire,—threats, which, alas, too  
well

He fulfilled to the utterance. Since for this,  
And also that I would not pleasure him  
With Enid for his bride (a child in years  
She was, not yet fifteen, though had she been  
A woman grown, I had not given her  
To such a profligate) he raised a band  
Of ruffian ne’er-do-wells, whom fast he bound  
With promises of pillage and free leave  
To stuff their hungry purses with the gold  
Of such as, for my sake, might dare oppose  
His usurpation; and one moonless night  
Four years this next September, with his troop  
Attacked me in the fortress thou hast seen,  
Wherein I lay unguarded, with few swords  
Upon my walls, since, maugre his wild threats,  
I had not dreamed of such ingratitude.  
So, hardly had I heard his battle-cry,  
When my gates inward crashed, and all the  
courts

Filled with my nephew's men; my men were  
slain,

And I was taken prisoner, and my wife  
And daughter dragged before me. Then he  
spake,

The son of Nudd, my brother, 'Hear me, earl:  
I grant thee one last opportunity  
To avert disgrace — give me the maid I love,  
My cousin, Enid.' Ere I could refuse,  
My daughter took the answer from my lips,  
With straight, white fearlessness, 'Not while I  
live!'

'Go, then!' he cried; 'In the old, wasted hall,  
Built by our forbears in an age long past,  
Take up your residence. In poverty  
Abide, ye three; for though, for bond of blood,  
I will not slay you, nathless, ye shall know  
The heaviness of my hand! And it may be  
The slowly-crawling years, lean, hard with want,  
And sick with memory of other days,  
Will bring me ampler vengeance than your  
deaths,  
With Death's enfranchisement! Go now!  
Away!'

"And outcast went we through our castle-gates  
Into the town. And knots of people stood  
Along the way, weeping and sorrowful —  
My friends — but impotent, silent from fear,

For Eddern's men were allwhere; and if once  
An arm were raised to help us, swift and sure  
The hired sword did its work. So did we come  
To this old hall, and here have we abode.

And though, in my first madness, I had thought  
To raise the land against him, soon I found  
Such hopes were vain, for though they pitied me,  
The goodmen, and some loved me, when I spake  
Of armed reprise, ever they edged away  
With talk of wives and daughters — how they  
could

Not jeopardize their safety. Others' wrongs  
Are easily forgiven, and the crime  
Of one in power men willingly condone.

“Moreover, with sure craft, my nephew used  
Unwonted latitude in all the laws  
He made for government, and privileges  
Unheard-of, gave the rabble. For this cause,  
And also that he is a mighty man  
Of war, of reckless valiance, hard of stroke,  
With scarce a match in tourney, therefore, they,  
The fickle mob, with facile compliance,  
Bowed to his will; ay, more, they gradually grew  
To pride them on the prowess of their earl,  
For so they came to call him, in despite  
Of my still living. Likewise, as he rose  
In their regard, I sank, for that is law;  
And so it fortun'd, in the very ones

Who owed me most, and loved me best, I  
thought,  
Little by little I perceived a change,—  
Less reverence, more of pity, and from that  
To less of pity, and a faint contempt  
For wrongs now wearisome — I, come to this,  
I, Lyconal, once lord of a broad land!

“ And thus, fair youth, well on to four slow  
years  
Have halted by; yet still that shameful night  
Burns in my brain. Never shall I forget  
That night’s humiliation till I die,—  
Who knows, mayhap not then. And when I  
think  
Upon my wife and daughter, all I have  
To love in the wide world — what they have lost  
Of comfort and of luxury, and how  
They suffer here in poverty, nay, want —  
Then am I like to die in my wanhope.  
Although it is a truth, that they, on whom  
Privation hath borne hardest, in their turn,  
With some high fortitude that I have not,  
Have borne it best — so uncomplainingly,  
So cheerfully, with such firm bravery —  
Often I shame me of my violence.

“ Now I am old; my dear wife, too, is old.  
For us there can not be much more of woe,

If woe outlive not life. And in that chance  
Would I rejoice, but that I think again  
Of my sweet daughter, Enid. I, once gone,  
Mine arm, however withered, once removed,  
Who then will guard her from the wolfish world?  
Who then will cherish her in these dark days  
Of lawlessness and many wandering lusts?  
Her fineness and her fairness — weak indeed  
Must such defenses be. And knowing this,  
How often have I wished I had a son  
To fight his sister's battles, to protect  
And foster her, the flowering of my race!  
Nay, nor to stop with that; but with my blood  
Singing a song of vengeance in his veins,  
To give once more my banner to the wind,  
To sound once more my cry before the walls  
Of mine own castle, to remaster it,  
To slay the traitor in the midst thereof,  
To lift again my house to its estate!"

And with the final word, the good earl's voice,  
Vibrant with feeling hardly held in check,  
Pealed clarionwise, as if himself had been  
Attacker and avenger, with the strength  
And warriorhood of other days, when oft  
He led his men into the thickest press,  
A shatterer of the foe! And ere the light  
Of visionary triumph could grow dim  
Within his eyes, he saw that Prince Geraint



Was watching him intently, with a strange  
And concentrated eagerness of gaze.  
Earnestly asked the prince: "Then is the man  
Who lords it now in yonder fortress-hall —  
Yea, even he who but this afternoon,  
Bearing a silver griffon on red shield,  
While all men hailed him as a conqueror,  
Did ride thereto with lady and with dwarf —  
Is he, in truth, thy nephew, noble earl?"  
"In very truth," said Lyconal, wondering,  
"None other, none but Eddern." "God be  
thanked!"

Cried then Geraint. "So do thy wrongs and  
mine

Cleave to a single man, and with one stroke  
Will I avenge us all!" And in the surge  
Of his exultancy, he whipped his sword  
Out from the figured scabbard, and it seemed  
A blade of fire, so fast the streaming light  
Poured from its edge. "Look! Look!" he  
cried again,  
"The sword of thy revenge, Sir Lyconal!"

And then to the bewildered earl he spake  
The purpose of his coming, in detail  
Told of the outrage done unto the Queen  
Through the Queen's damsel, how himself re-  
ceived,  
From the dwarf's hand, the insult of the blow

Of which upon his neck the stripes were blue,  
While Eddern, son of Nudd, permitted all.  
“ And since I could not punish him at the time,  
These two days have I followed, and I find,  
Now, that the man who hath despoiled thee,  
And the uncourteous knave whose arrogance  
Dared to indignify even the Queen,  
Are one man and the same ; wherefore I say,  
When meeting him as Guenevere’s champion,  
On thy cause, too, will I encounter him,  
And in one battle, with one selfsame sword,  
If Fortune speed me, will I vanquish him,  
And from him force the reparation due  
Unto our sovran Lady and unto thee.  
My name I have not told thee, yet it is  
Full fitting thou shouldst know ; I am Geraint,  
King Erbin’s son of Devon, and a knight  
Of Arthur’s court.”

Which hearing, Lyconal,  
Seizing the prince’s hand, with hearty joy  
Clasped it and said : “ Do I then see Geraint? —

Geraint of Devon? Ah, fair youth, I knew  
Thou wert of noble parage — manifest  
Is that made by thy bearing — yet never  
dreamed

That thou shouldst stand so close beside the  
throne

As Erbin's son, the cousin of the King.  
 How often have I heard high things of thee! —  
 How, foremost ever in the tourney-fray,  
 No less within the fiercer shock of war,  
 The golden eagles of my lord Geraint  
 Wing to the victory! Heard have I, too,  
 Of thy great gentleness and courtesy,  
 Which are the crown of knighthood!"

"Nay, fair sir,"

Answered Geraint, "do we not speak of these.  
 Rather devise how earliest, in just quarrel,  
 I may engage with Eddern."

Lyconal

Pondered awhile, and at the last he spake  
 Slowly, as one perplexed: "Thus stands the  
 case:

My nephew comes from Narberth, whither he  
 went

A sennight since, for there a prince let cry  
 A tournament, the circlet-prize whereof  
 The shout goes Eddern won; he is well-made,  
 Large-bodied as thou dost know, of tireless  
 strength,

Valiant to recklessness. Now he is come  
 Again, no whit too soon, since on the morn,  
 Even to-morrow morn, himself will hold  
 A princely tournament, which men have named

The Tourney of the Sparrow-hawk, for there,  
Shining across the meadowed tilting-field,  
Two forkéd shafts of silver will be set,  
On them a silver rod, and thereupon,  
A sparrow-hawk of gold, destined to her  
Whose beauty by her champion's chivalry  
Shall be proved paramount. And all the  
knights

That thou hast seen — it is this cause which  
fills

My town with folk, making the streets to sound  
With clang of arms — well-harnessed and well-  
horsed,

Will ride into the meadow, and with each  
The lady whom best he loves. There will they  
hold

Contention for the golden sparrow-hawk,  
On one part, Eddern and his vassal-knights,  
And on the other, all who from afar  
Have journeyed to strive against them. Unto  
all

Applies one ruling: no knight may contend  
Saving his love come with him.

“These two years  
The tourney hath been held, hath Eddern gained  
The golden gree, for few enough there are  
Who can endure his stroke. And if this year  
He gain it once again, then will no more

Be held the tournament, and he will be  
Knight of the Sparrow-hawk from that time  
forth

Entitled, though already some do call  
Him so in compliment. He will desire  
His lady to take the hawk, saying to her:  
'Fairest of women art thou; wherefore, this  
year

The prize should long to thee, as it hath longed  
These two years previous. If any will  
Deny thee, let him keep him well from me!'"

"Then will *I* make denial!" said Geraint,  
"So must he battle with me! Blade to blade,  
Shield against shield — I ask no more than this!

I have my horse, and if I may have arms  
As loan from thee, I will defy him straight,  
And strength to strength, undo him if I may!"

"Nay," answered Lyconal, "thou dost forget  
The rule of which I spake. Arms shalt thou  
have;

Nathless, thou mayest not joust; nor dame nor  
maid

Is in thy company. No knight may joust,  
But if the one whom best in the wide world  
He loves, be at the field."

Whereat there fell

A pause that grew in silence, and Geraint  
Thought of the maiden Enid, whom he loved,

Only, in all the world; and swiftly clear,  
A great delight raced through him — dared he  
    hope  
That *she* would go with him? And yet to ask  
For her thus hastily, without one word,  
Even, of wooing — surely that were wrong,  
Worse than discourteous; and yet again,  
The tourney-law must needfully be observed,  
If he would meet her foe. So Prince Geraint  
Debated with himself, but rose at last,  
And leaned across the table to the earl,  
And spake with quiet manfulness: “My lord,  
The lady whom alone in all the world  
I love, is here, within these towers of thine,—  
Thy daughter, Enid. Sooth, I never saw  
Her brightness till this day; but this I know,  
That truly never hath man loved a maid  
As I love her; her gentleness, her grace,  
Passing all others’— as a miracle  
They seem to me, for earthly maid too fair.  
Thou knowest me, who I am. Wherefore if  
    thou  
Couldst give me Enid to wife (though I must  
    seem  
In very truth presumptuous, that I ask  
Thy one great treasure), fortunèd it I lose  
To-morrow battle and life, still would she be  
Unsullied as before; and should I win,  
Then would I take her unto Arthur’s hall,

Make her my bride, and set mine every thought  
To increase her worship and her happiness.  
And I would love her to my length of days,  
And care for her as no man else could care,  
However worthier. I would excel  
All men in my great love's true tenderness.  
That may I promise thee. Yea, should I fail  
Therein but once, then might high God requite  
Me with deserved punishment,— a shame  
To knighthood and to manhood!"

"Be it so!"

Answered Earl Lyconal, "I could not find  
A better husband for her — nay, nor ask  
A better — than Erbin's son. So do I troth  
To thee my daughter, Enid. I would say  
Honour her with the honour that is due  
Such excellence as hers, but knowing thee,  
I am content. And now, my lord Geraint,  
We must take counsel how we can restore  
Mine ancient armour, weakened with disuse,  
Broken, I fear. No time have we to lose;  
For the night latens fast, and by the prime  
Thou must be entered in the tilting-field."

### III

WHILE yet the eastern hills were pale with  
dawn,  
High in the breeze-swept turret where he lay,  
Geraint arose, and armed him for the fight  
In Lyconal's armour, and with steps that  
clanged  
Upon the stone-hewed stair, betook himself  
To the small courtyard to make ready his horse,  
Stoutly, against the combat.

And it chanced  
That Enid, passing through the darksome hall,  
Came to the court's low portal, where she saw  
The young knight all in armour, saw his steed  
Harnessed for war and ready to depart.  
And Enid thought, "Is he so fain to fare?"  
And thought again, "Why must he fare so  
soon?"  
Thrilled with a shy, vague sorrow, though she  
knew  
Not yet her love for him. And hesitant  
She stood a space; then lightly stepped outside  
Upon the old grey porch, and slowly said,  
With wistfulness unpurposed in her tone,  
"So soon to go, fair lord?"



Whereat Geraint,  
Uplooking, saw her there, and his young love  
Leaped in his eyes at the sweet sight of her!  
For framed she was in somber ivy-sprays,  
And crowned with closed, white honeysuckle-  
blossoms!

And all the dawn seemed shining on her brow,  
And all the court seemed brimming with a light  
That had not been before! "Not to go far,  
Sweet maid," replied the prince, and at her  
words

With joyance did his heart grow clamorous,  
"But to the tilting-field."

But Enid knew  
Not what the speech betokened, and she felt  
A wonderment exceeding, and she said,  
"And wilt thou, O my lord, enter the fray?"  
Then Geraint knew that she had not been told,  
And he stood mute and saddened, and in shame  
Of that which he intended.

But behold,  
Into the courtyard came Sir Lyconal  
And saw the twain. Straightway he went to  
them,  
And placed in Prince Geraint's his daughter's  
hand;  
And while she blushed uncomprehendingly,

Startled, wide-eyed, her father said: "My  
child,

I have not yet informed thee that last night  
I did betroth thee to this youth, who now  
This morn, will fight with Eddern, our common  
foe.

Within the hour do we accompany him  
Down to the meadow, where thyself shall be  
In all men's sight the one whom best he loves.  
And if he win the battle, Enid mine,  
Then will he take thee unto Arthur's court  
And wed thee with all honour. Cause indeed  
Is there for naught save pride in this alliance,  
For he is son of Erbin, Devon's king,  
Geraint, cousin to Arthur. Thou hast heard  
Me speak full often of him in high praise."

Which saying, Lyconal passed within the hall.  
Again they were alone. And Enid said  
Never a word and drew her hand away.

| Her face held a white wonder, and her eyes  
| Had depths no man might fathom. Straight  
and still,

Scarce seeming mortal, in the awakening hush  
Of the new day she stood, the first long ray  
Of the sun, bright on her temples. And Geraint,

Waiting in vain for but one word, one glance,  
Looked forward to the emptiness of life

Which must, without her, be forever his ;  
And in the shadow of those sunless years,  
Drearly put the hoping from his heart,  
And curbed his longing, and very gently said :

“ I see it is displeasing unto thee.  
Forgive me that I thought — ay, truly  
thought —

Thou knewest all, perchance not disinclined.  
Well am I ware (and was ware at the time!)  
That I had in my mind a shameful thing  
(Which still I would have done!) — to make  
thee mine,

Unwooded, unwon, to serve mine own delight  
By taking thee, all loveless, as a bride,  
Thy will not free, constrained. No excuse  
Have I to offer but my love for thee ;  
Howbeit, Love himself can not excuse  
The bound of my presumption. O my dear,  
Now dearest when I shut me from thy smile,  
Forgive me if thou canst ! Yet must I crave  
One little boon. Thou knowest the tourney-law,  
And how, if I will battle with the man  
Who hath so injured thee, I must comply  
With that same law. Wherefore I ask thee, be  
My lady for this day, and if I win —  
And win I will or die — that very hour,  
Out from the tilt-yard will I ride away,  
Giving thee freedom to bestow thy heart

Upon some happier man of thine own choice,—  
Unbidden, uncompelled. And afterwards  
I shall not come again — I shall not see  
Thee ever any more — not any more  
Trouble thee with my presence, though alway  
Mine eyes see nothing but thy golden hair,  
Mine ears hear nothing but thy magic voice  
Singing of Faerie. Only this I claim  
Ever as mine — my memory of thee;  
Thou wilt not bid me to put that away  
And make me, to the utterance, desolate!”

And having said, he thought if he might once  
Kiss just her finger-tips, he would not ask  
More than that little heaven! But unto him  
Amazed, not daring to believe what wrought  
The strange, new, subtle marvel in her smile,  
Enid turned slowly, and these words she spake:  
“My love, my knight, true lover and true  
knight,  
I love thee well,” and kissed him on the lips!

And not within the soul of Prince Geraint  
Had burned a stronger self-transforming flame,  
Springing toward all high things, when in the  
blaze  
Of altar-tapers, through the silent hours —  
Silent, but were they stirred with presences? —  
A candidate for knighthood, he had kept

The mystic vigil which should purify  
And cleanse him to a fittingness to take  
The strait, stern vows of Arthur's chivalry,  
Than now this morn within his soul there burned,  
When kneeling in a shrine not served of hands,  
When kneeling in the priestless fane of Love,  
Whose altar is the holiest in the world;  
When from himself he was so lifted up  
That all his homage towered to one fair height  
And all intention streamed to one resolve —  
By conduct ever nobler, knightlier,  
To prove Love's grace was not too ill bestowed,  
To prove, so far as any might deserve  
Such grace, he would deserve it, by his life.

So they went forward to the tilting-field,  
Lyconal and his countess, following them,  
Geraint and Enid. And the ways were dense  
With motley press of people — men-at-arms  
And craftsmen of the guilds and serving-folk,  
Granted a holiday; and burgesses,  
Prosperous merchants clad in costly silks,  
With their stout, comely wives and cherry-  
cheeked,  
Beribboned daughters; and as white of throat  
And slim of waist as maidens, their long hair  
Perfumed and curled, young pages to the great,  
Bright in their broideries and golden chains,  
Vivid in purple stuffs and damassins.

Like to the sea, the ever-eddying throngs  
Billowed and surged ; and even as the sea  
Is cleft by the sharp, spume-upcasting prow,  
Cleft were the crowds, when haughtily and slow,  
His squire behind him bearing lance and shield,  
His lady on her palfrey at his side,  
Upon a great destrier, caparisoned  
In colour-flaunting silk, himself in mail  
And pluméd helm, a knight adventurous  
Passed to the tournament.

And so, at length,  
They saw a meadow jewelléd with the dew,  
Besprent with tiny blooms of gold and white.  
And there the lists were set, the barriers  
Defined, and dazzling, at one end thereof,  
Upon a silver rod, the sparrow-hawk  
In its small, golden body caught the gold  
Of the new sun, and like a tiny sun  
Flamed with a golden glory athwart the field.  
And round the meadow were pavilions gay  
Of silks of various colours ; and of these,  
The midmost and the largest was of blue,  
The brightest azure, and a banner streamed  
Therefrom, wrought with a sparrow-hawk of  
gold.  
And Lyconal said, " There does my nephew  
bide."

And who could tell the splendor of the knights,  
In gorgeous pageantry around the lists  
Riding with curvet, bound, and caracole? —  
The paintures and the blazonings of their  
shields,

The colours of their surcoats, of their arms,  
The tinctures of their favours, veils and sleeves,  
The trappours of their steeds? There were em-  
ployed

All marvelous hues and fair — scarlet and  
green,

Flame-coloured, indigo, and party-tints,  
Deep-hearted crimson and clear azure-blue,  
And much of silver, and even more of gold.  
And how to tell the glitter and the show,  
The flash of jewels, the glance of purple silks,  
Whiteness of ermine, fulgor of cislatoon,  
Shimmer of samite, sheen of woven gold,  
And, fairer far, the sheen of golden hair,  
Vermeil of lips, azure of laughing eyes,  
Whiteness of throat, of bosom, and of brow —  
The fairness of fair ladies, damsel, dame,  
Matron and supple maid, where, from the tiers  
Of silk-spread, cushioned seats, they viewed the  
field?

All was such colour, brilliance and estate,  
All was such joyance and great merriment,  
That Prince Geraint, beholding this array,  
Thought he had seen no goodlier ordinance

At Castle Lonazep, nor at Surluse  
When Galahalt of the High Heart let cry  
The seven-days tournament, whose rumor drew  
Kings from afar and princes from out-isles.

But even while his admiration paid  
To each detail the praise well-merited,  
Still he remembered how this lavishness,  
This pomp, this many-hued magnificence,  
Was of an ingrate's giving, and he turned  
And spake to Lyconal: "Most noble earl,  
All this which in itself is admirable,  
But which the treason of the usurper stains,  
Is thine of right, and shall be thine again,  
Saving I die."

Then to the barriers  
Came pursuivants, and shrilly blew to field.  
Forthright, by opposite ways, into the lists  
Two squadrons rode, whereof in one were ranged  
All errant knights, who, journeying from afar,  
Sought to increase their worship and renown;  
While from the other, marshalled in serried  
ranks,  
The vassal-knights of Eddern fronted them,  
Though he himself came not. Which noticing,  
Lyconal said, "Prince, take no part in this;  
Await my nephew's entrance." As he spake,  
With mighty shock of battle the lines met



In mides of the field. There many a spear  
To-shivered, many a horse plunged riderless,  
And headlong many a knight was hurled to  
earth,

Among the broken flowers and sodden grass,  
Beneath the trampling hoofs of wounded steeds.  
Hither and thither flowed the battle-tide,  
One party now ascendant, and again,  
The other ; so, with victory pendulous,  
They fought unceasingly two hours and more,  
Until at last, disparply, overborne,  
The errant knights were driven from the field,  
And Eddern's men had triumphed.

And once more,  
After the exultation died away,  
The heralds blew to field, and instantly  
Fell an expectant hush. And Prince Geraint  
Leaped lightly to the saddle, and his lance  
Placed in the rest. Then Enid came and stood  
Beside him, and unbound the folded width  
Of silk which was her wimple, and with hands  
That trembled, gave it him, speaking so low  
Her words he just could hear, "O knight of  
mine,  
I have naught else to give thee ; wilt thou wear  
This as my favour?" Joyously the prince,  
Binding about his arm the glistening silk,  
Answered, and gently : "See ! I wear it here

Upon my sword-arm. It will render me  
Invincible, for Love empowers it;  
Though my foe have the strength of twenty  
men,  
He hath not strength to overcome me now!"

Straightway behold, forth from the azure tent  
Rode Eddern, son of Nudd. Azure and gold  
Were his accoutrements, his shield's device,  
A golden sparrow-hawk. His greaves were  
light

Yet strong, and highly polished; triple steel  
Was woven in the mail which covered him;  
And from his burnished helm uprose a crest  
Of three bright-yellow plumes.

With arching neck  
And all of stately slowness, his destrier,  
In yellow sendal housed, bordured with blue,  
Stepped through the lists, and great was the  
acclaim

Attending the knight's progress. Lance in rest,  
He rode the meadow's length and drew in rein  
Beside the shafts of silver. Then to him,  
Upon her fair, white palfrey, with the dwarf  
Walking close to her stirrup, came the one  
Whom best he loved, and Eddern took her hand  
And spake that all might hear: "The loveliest

Of women art thou; wherefore, take down the  
prize,  
This sparrow-hawk of gold. It is the meed  
Of thy surpassing beauty. If any will  
Forfend thee, he must answer with his life!"

But Geraint interposed: "Not unto thee,  
Lady, belongs the prize, for if it be  
The meed of beauty, then must it belong  
Unto this maiden fairer far than thou —  
Fairer, more courteous, and lovelier! —  
And that will I maintain with my heart's  
blood!"

And Eddern looked upon him in amaze.  
He did not recognize him; for who would  
Have recognized the youth of yesterday,  
Clad then with satin and with purple silk,  
In this tall knight in ancient, battered arms?  
And in that first glance seeing but the arms —  
The uncouth helm, the ventail worn and old,  
The rusted hauberk with its broken rings,  
The cumbrous greaves, the antique, dinted shield  
Wherefrom long since the painture had been  
raised,  
Swiftly his wonderment passed into scorn  
And scornfully a sneer formed on his lips.  
But, on an afterthought, looking beyond  
To see what lady this too reckless youth

Had vaunted fairer, met his cousin's eyes —  
His cousin Enid's! — met Sir Lyconal's  
Bitter, accusing gaze, saw Lyconal's wife,  
And understood it was their champion  
Who challenged him! And with a violent wave  
Of anger crimsoning his face, he cried,  
“Then guard thee from thy death!”

Whereat they drew  
Apart an acre's space, feutred their spears,  
Clapped spurs unto their steeds, and with the  
    sound  
Of thunder melled together, that the lance  
In each man's hand brake even to the haft.  
Then Lyconal served Geraint a second spear,  
And so the dwarf served Eddern, and again  
In onslaught furious, with the fearful shock  
Of warring winds, they met, and yet again,  
Three sets of lances shivering to bits.  
But for the fourth encounter, the good earl  
Bare to Geraint a spear of wondrous strength,  
With a great, flawless shaft and a strong point,  
Well-tempered and well-sharpened: “Prince,  
    behold  
The lance I held what day I was made knight,  
Many long years ago. It may endure  
Where others fail; take it and strike him  
    down!”

Aiming at Eddern's shield, Geraint spurred  
hard,

And countering, again his foeman's spear  
To splinters flew, but Lyconal's lance held fast,  
And cleft the shield in twain and brake the mail  
And burst the girths, that down from his  
destrier,

Saddle and all, Eddern was dashed to earth.

But he rose, raging. Unto him Geraint,  
Quickly dismounting, casting shield away  
That he might have no vantage in the fight,  
Rushed, and each drew his sword, and fiercely  
smote

Upon the other's helm, that sparks of fire  
Sprang from the clashing of the steel on steel  
In the grim rain of blows. With stroke and  
foyne,

Tracing, traversing, now on the right hand,  
Now on the left, they fought like more than men,  
And neither could prevail, so equally  
Were they twain matched. Their helms were  
split and crushed,

Their ventails rent; their hauberks, all to-  
hacked,

Hung on them in long shreds; their arms grew  
faint

With their unceasing travail, and their sight  
Dim, through a mist of blood. Then suddenly

Eddern lunged mightily, and smote Geraint  
So hard upon the temple that the steel  
Of his helm, sundering, a flake of steel  
Was riven away, and only the thin coiffe  
Protected the brain, and the descending sword  
Cleft wide the mail upon the prince's side  
More than a hand's breadth. Giddily then  
Geraint

Reeled from the blow, and Enid tried to speak  
But could not for the horror, and of the shout  
Of Lyconal, "O vengeance for the Queen!"  
Geraint heard not a word. But while his ears  
Were filled with roarings, and above his eyes  
A darkness writhed, and all of life and love  
Seemed slipping, slipping from him, in one  
glimpse

Narrowed by closing lids, upon his arm  
He saw the silken favour given of love,  
And all it meant to him flashed through his  
mind;

And for one final effort he called to him  
The fullness of his strength, and raised his  
sword

High, high above his head and with such force  
Smote on the other's helm that the sword  
crashed

Through helm and coiffe of steel, through skin  
and flesh,

And stayed not till it wounded even the bone —

And as a dead man falls, fell Eddern to earth.

Then while the knights and ladies gathered  
round

With sighs and exclamations, Prince Geraint  
Unlaced his foeman's ventail, and the air  
Drew Eddern from his swooning. And the  
prince

Spake to Sir Lyconal, "My lord, behold  
Thy strong oppressor. Shall he live or die?  
Unto thy will I give him." And the earl,  
Long-looking on his brother's only son,  
Made answer: "I have thought if ever came  
The means to slay him, with rejoicing should  
I send him down to death. Now it *is* come,  
And lo, I can not. For a ghost is here  
'Twixt me and my revengement. Seeing him,  
Why must I see my brother? Let him live,  
So he make reparation!"

"Son of Nudd,  
Eddern," said Prince Geraint, "thy life is  
spared

Upon thy promise to perform two things;  
Refuse, thou diest." But the fallen man  
moaned,

"Die? Live or die? What matter? — I am  
shamed!"

"First, thou shalt render to Sir Lyconal,

Thine uncle, what is his — all goods and gold,  
Lands and retainers. On this very field  
Shalt thou thus reinstate him. Then straight-  
way,

With lady and with dwarf thou shalt ride forth  
To Arthur's hall, before Queen Guenevere  
To cast thyself, such full amends to make  
As she may adjudge fitting. Marvel not!  
Dost thou forget how but two days ago,  
Beside the Wood of Dean, thou didst allow  
Thy dwarf to strike the damsel of the Queen,  
And through her, to insult the Queen herself?  
Dost thou forget the knight who also had  
A blow from thy slave's hand? I am that  
knight,

But with mine own revenge am I content.  
For that outrage thou goest to Guenevere,  
Saying Geraint hath sent thee. Yea or nay?"  
And Eddern, son of Nudd, in halting speech  
Replied, "So be it! These will I perform;  
Though why I hardly know, saving it be,  
To make my shame the greater, even while  
shamed,  
Life waxes sweet!"

And tottering he rose,  
The red mire clinging to his golden plumes,  
And swaying with the weakness of his hurt,



Made proclamation that unto the earl,  
His uncle, he did render lands and goods —  
All whereof he had reaved him — and ordained  
That all his knights do homage to the earl  
And be his vassals true ; and kneeling low,  
Within Sir Lyconal's hands he placed his own  
Limp, bloodless hands, and swore him fealty.  
Then called he for his horse and rode away,  
His dwarf in sullen silence at his side,  
His lady, much lamenting. And he fared  
Unto Caerlleon, and the Queen was kind  
And pardoned him and healed him,— ay, did  
more ;

For seeing well that in him was a force  
Of manhood truly great, though evil life  
Had warped it to misusage, Guenevere,  
By ever-gentle tact and courtesy,  
And high ensample of fair chivalry,  
Won Eddern to a hatred of the old,  
Fierce lawlessness he once had revelled in ;  
And though the task was difficult, and the way  
Fraught with discouragements, he grew at last  
Into a greater Eddern, no less brave  
And resolute than before, but loving truth  
And right and gentleness,— a man esteemed  
Both by his fellows of the Table Round,  
And by the King. And Arthur stablished him  
As governor in the wild, northern land —  
A post full honourable and perilous —



At every corner gathered, and well guessed  
Their eager talk of what that day had seen.

Thither to him came noble Lyconal,  
Attired in crimson, overwrought with gold.  
Bright was his face with happiness, and it  
    seemed  
Full twenty years had from his shoulders  
    slipped,  
So blithely straight, his carriage. "My lord  
    earl,"

Said Prince Geraint, "it does content me well  
To see thee in thy properness of state.  
And Enid — where is she?" Ere answering,  
Lyconal smiled, "She will array herself  
To do thee honour, prince." Whereat Geraint  
Smiled also but said earnestly, "My lord,  
I pray thee ask will she first speak with me."  
Lyconal went with that request, and soon  
Came Enid, and upon her arm she bare  
The robe she wished to don,— a wondrous silk  
Of shaded blue, with such dense broidery  
Of tiny silver flowers it had the sheen  
Of moonlight on deep waters; and she showed  
The wonders of the dress, dwelling thereon  
With a shy pride and gladness. But Geraint,  
With eyes for her face only, where the play  
Of rose upon the white and white on rose  
Wrought beauty ever new and marvelous,

Took both her hands in his and spake to her: ‘

“Belovéd, wouldst thou think me rude, unkind,  
If I should say, ‘Wear not this glittering  
gown,—

Not to the feast thy father holds this eve,  
Neither to-morrow, going to Arthur’s hall.  
Wear rather this, thy satiny robe of white,  
Though old it be, and worn?’ Nay, do not  
look

So grieved, so woebegone. Though I must seem  
Capricious, strangely-humoured, pleasure me,  
My Enid, in this matter. I would have  
The Queen, and the Queen only, of her grace  
To clothe thee in arrayment sumptuous  
First on that day when I may call thee bride.  
Thou art my love, the Queen, a most true friend,  
As she will be thy friend on knowing thee;  
I trust ye twain will love each other well.  
To her hands would I take thee, by her hands  
To be attired full fairly. And again,  
I love thee in this garb; more fair art thou  
To me in this white vest than didst thou wear  
A gown of woven gold. In this I saw  
Thee first and knew I loved thee, and in this,  
Truly it seems to me thou hast a charm —  
Though what it is I find no words to tell —  
Thou couldst not have in a more stately robe.  
At court much must be different; but here,

Seeing thee thus, all white and rose and gold,  
And thinking how I found thee, how I heard  
Thee singing in the sunset's witchery,  
I sometimes think I have won not a maid  
Of mortal fairness and of mortal love,  
But a white fay from Faerie; for the fays,  
Like thee, have hair of gold, colour as bright  
And clearly delicate, lips red like thine,  
Voice of the same sweet music, and they wear  
White always, like to this. My wish it is  
To keep thy faery whiteness while I may;  
Belovéd, wilt thou pleasure me in this? "

And willingly she put the gown away.  
And by the prince's side, at that great feast  
Sat, robed in ancient white, the hawk of gold  
Before her, and a light within her eyes;  
And all men said she was the fairest there.

#### IV

WHEN the next day lay bright upon the land,  
Toward undorne waxing, the farewells were  
said —

Farewells, with smiles and tears. And then Ger-  
raint

Placed Enid on her palfrey white as milk,  
Her father's parting gift; and so, while high  
Upon the parapets to watch them go  
Stood Lyconal and his wife, below them grouped  
The lords and ladies of the earl's household,  
Waving gay scarves in lingering farewell,  
They twain did ride away, and it was June,  
And all the world was bathed in molten gold  
Of June's young sunshine. And with golden  
hair

Netting the sunlight, with eyes luminous  
By reason of the brightness in her soul,  
In vest of white upon her milk-white steed,  
Unto her lover Enid was as one  
But lately come from Faerie,— far too fair  
For this old world. And ever must he think  
In a sheer, humble wonder, “Lo, her eyes!  
Her smile, her smile! These are the totaling  
Of all my life! That these should be for me!”

They went another way than that o'er which  
Geraint had followed Eddern when he came.  
Dividing the deep verdance of the hills,  
The road ran on, so hedged with the gay  
    broom's  
Bright-blossoming gold, it might have been the  
    path  
To some land of enchantment,— even that  
Which old romances say forever leads  
To the far Plain of Pleasure. Larkspurs  
    reared  
Their columned purple, wilding roses trailed  
Their pink blooms by the way. Never the sky  
Had been of hue more wonderful — a dome  
Of pale, translucent sapphire, in whose vault  
Glittered those ice-white mansions which the  
    clouds  
Do build for Summer's dwelling, many-towered  
And hundred-turreted, with argent, halled,  
With the sun's gold, emportaled. And Geraint  
Remembered him of Launfal, and the fay,  
And how they rode to Faerie; and he said,  
“ Like Launfal and his love in olden time,  
My Enid, do we ride to that far land  
Of every rainbow's ending? ” But her eyes  
Were grave, her smile half-wistful, and she said,  
“ Triamour am I not, mine own Geraint.”

And they came to a meadow, where a stream —

A rivulet a boy could step across —  
Glinted in fluent sunfire between banks  
Now darksome under drooping willow-boughs,  
Now with white daisies bordured, and the frail,  
Tremulous blue of harebells, swinging light  
Upon thread-slender stems. The meadow-  
grass,

Lush, feathery, sweet-scented, bowed beneath  
The pressure of the wind's invisible  
But audible wings — motion so rhythmical  
That all before the riders was a sea  
Of undulating green, save when, at times,  
Ghost-grey upon the greenness, glidingly  
Floated the shadows of the summer clouds.  
And so, through multiple play of light and  
shade

Fared Enid and Geraint, and as they passed  
Across the meadow, somewhere in the blue  
Above, or in the emerald at their feet,  
A lark sang joyously.

And when the sun  
Burned in the zenith, and the slumberous noon  
Weighted the world, and a fine, aureate mist  
Of straightly-falling radiance, curtain-wise  
Hung between earth and sky, in its deep glow  
So veiled the land that all things were trans-  
formed

To a strange, bright illusion, beautiful



As that bright Isle of Summer which is seen  
Sometimes on phantom wave-line, rested they  
Beneath a mighty ash-tree, at the edge  
Of a great forest. And of white and gold  
Was woven the flower-carpet of the wood,  
And white and gold was Enid; and Geraint,  
Watching the sifted sunlight in her hair,  
Dreamed of the Courts of Faerie, and he said,  
“O Princess of the Vale of Avalon,  
What splendor is upon thee?” But her smile  
Was grave, and her eyes wistful, and she said,  
“Splendor of Avalon would it were, my lord!”

And they rode forward through the forest-land.  
Often by stately avenues they passed  
To noble parks and spacious pleasaunces;  
And otherwhile, by paths of bending fern,  
Entered close, humid coverts, alder-screened  
To a perpetual twilight, where they saw  
Tall, white and graceful lilies, like young saints  
Sheltered in shadowed cloisters. Thus they  
fared

Until in lengthening shades the undertide  
Journeyed to even, and the west grew flame  
With the sun's setting, when, in a fair glade,  
The lovers checked their steeds, and with one  
thought,

Wordless before the beauty, watched the sky  
Fade from its gorgeous purple and its rose,

Through pinks and amethysts, with paling  
gleams

Of opal lights, through pearls and lavenders,  
Into dove-grey and dully-brooding blue;  
While to the south, above dim barbicans  
Of vapors violet, one great star shone,  
A glimmer of red gold.

So with the awe  
Of that wide loveliness possessing them,  
While all around the blossom-redolent dusk  
Spread its enchantments, and a throstle's song  
Was poured upon the evening in a flood  
Of music almost palpable, they came  
Unto a forest hermitage — a pile  
Of low, grey walls, laved by a mountain rill,  
And topped by ancient trees wherethrough the  
wind

Breathed with insistent harmonies. Therein  
They parted for the night, and in her heart  
Enid knew well, as knew Geraint in his,  
That never would a day of such delight  
Be theirs again,— never, for all their love —  
That never such a day could be again.

When the next afternoon was but half-spent,  
Below them to the south, they saw the line  
Of vaporous blue which marked the Severn Sea;  
And nearer, in the green vale of the Usk's

Broad, sinuous flood, white-shining in the sun,  
Beheld Caerlleon's heaven-yearning towers.

Then they went forward gladly, and in haste,  
And heard a sound of harping. In the wood  
Walked Alarin the harper, and a knight  
Was with him of the name of Honolan,  
Famed for his fine, fair hair; and by a strain  
Of blood, much thinned and weakened though it  
was,

This Honolan was kinsman to Geraint.  
Yet closest kinsmanhood had never served  
To make him love Geraint; for envious  
He was of heart, and that King Arthur held  
The prince high in his favour, honouring him  
In measure to the knightliness he showed,  
Was ample reason for Sir Honolan  
To hate Geraint in secret, and to hope,  
Above all other hopes, to work him woe.  
And yet, until a time should come, he kept  
His malice so concealed, he was so smooth,  
So silken-soft of manner, free with smiles,  
And traitorly fine-spoken, that no one,  
Geraint the least of all, could dream him false.

As these two loitered down the forest-path,  
Around a sudden turn, where the thick sward  
Muffled their coming, Enid and the prince  
Rode through a patch of sunlight. And as one

Bewitched, at the white beauty of the maid  
Alarin stared, and all thought of his song  
Fled from him, and unknowing what he did,  
He struck so roughly the taut music-strings  
That whirring shrill one snapped beneath his  
hand.

Which, Honolan perceiving, smiled, and bowed  
To cover that too evil smile, and spake  
With all of joy and fervor to Geraint:  
“Welcome, my lord! Thy coming gladdens me  
Past my poor powers of speech. We have all  
heard

The story of thy prowess, from the lips  
Of one who now is yolden, and retired,  
At the Queen’s command, into a holy house  
Until his wounds be healed. Hearing the tale,  
Who did rejoice as I, who am thy kin?  
But one desire had I, this hour fulfilled —  
To see thee in thy triumph, and to say  
Thy pride therein is not so great as mine.  
And that, when seeing thee, he sees also  
The fairest lady eyes have ever seen,  
Doubles the joy of thy friend, Honolan.”

To whom made answer gaily Prince Geraint:  
“Fair-spoken ever! Knew I not thy heart,  
Good kinsman, I might think thy words too  
fair;  
But in my knowing they ring with truth,

Thy joy is timely, cousin. I am blest  
 Beyond all dream of blessing! I am loved  
 By Enid, daughter of Earl Lyconal.”  
 And while bowed Honolan, Geraint spake on  
 To Alarin, who silent stood apart,  
 “And thou, Sir Stitcher of the Threads of  
     Song,  
 Make me a song of bridals, for this night  
 I wed the one rare maiden of the world!”  
 Whereto with slow speech Alarin replied,  
 “To sing at others’ bridals, fair, my lord,  
 I think will ever be my lot in life.  
 Yet doubt not! Thou shalt have a goodly  
     song.”

Then they went onward to Caerlleon’s gate,  
 The four in company; and when the watch,  
 Stationed upon the ramparts of the King,  
 Beheld their near approach, the news was sent  
 To Guenevere that Prince Geraint did come,  
 And with him was a lady passing fair.  
 And with a noble following, the Queen  
 Went forth to meet and greet them, and with  
     words  
 Of gentleness and courtesy she gave  
 To Enid welcome as a friend to be.

And that day, for the wedding, Guenevere  
 Clothed Enid in the garments of a bride,

With gold and jewels upon her, and in her hair  
Jewels and gold. Yet now though like the sun  
For beauty and for brightness, Enid prayed  
That her old, satin vest be not destroyed;  
For thinking how Geraint had held it dear,  
She would preserve it always. And the Queen  
Smiled understandingly and had the gown  
Laid in a chest of cedar.

And that night  
Before Saint Aaron's altar they were wed.  
And afterwards, in the great banquet-hall,  
At the gay bridal-feasting, Alarin,  
True to his promise, sang a goodly song,  
Which song he called Love's House, and it was  
this:

“Lo, Love hath builded him a stately hall,  
Whereof the ceiling's arch he fashioneth  
Of imagery so delicate a breath  
Might blur it all to discord; on the wall  
The ancient arras, pictured folds a-fall,  
With voice of myriad lovers murmureth,  
Whose sighs and smiles are warp and woof withal.

“And to irradiate that noble room,  
The lamp of Purity, with steadfast fire,  
Forever shadowlessly burneth higher,  
Fed by sweet oil of Fair Thought, whose perfume  
Balmier is than orient amber-hume,

More subtle than what fragrances suspire  
From moon-white flowers of Faerie full in bloom.

“Lo, Love hath made for him an hallowed place,  
Whereof the portal is of beauty rare;  
The door-trees are of Constancy, more fair,  
Finer than finest porphyry; a grace,  
Passing all earthly fulgence, from the face  
Of Truth is shed, from that high lintel, where  
He standeth, kingly crowned, with crystal mace.

“And at the threshold, which is Sympathy,  
Two staves of odorous sandal, opposite  
Each unto other, without light belit,  
Do bear two banners of bright blazonry,  
Vermeil and green, and in charactery  
Of gold, the vermeil hath upon it writ  
Time, but the green one hath Eternity.

“Such is Love’s temple. Whoso would intrude  
With forceful foot and portment orgulous,  
And speech imperative and clamorous,  
Love doth outcast, for never manner rude  
He suffereth. But unto him imbued  
With all humility, he sayeth thus:  
‘Enter, O Heart, into beatitude!’”





## THE TRIAL OF ENID



## I

THREE years had sped, three years of cloudless  
joy ;

And still Geraint and Enid at the court  
Of Arthur lingered, happy in their love  
Which had known never failing, but become  
More wonderful with every piling day,  
And in the fair renown that each had gained.  
For as the bud is to the perfect bloom,  
So was the Enid of that earlier charm  
Of Faerie, and the new grace of a maid,  
Unto the Enid of this latelier time,  
Blossomed to more, not less, of loveliness ;  
Enid, by years ennobled, on whom was set  
The light of a great beauty, and the crown  
Of gracious, ever-stainless womanhood,  
Of whom all men said honour as a wife  
And praise as a fair woman, and whom the  
Queen

Held as the first and closest of her friends,  
Loving her even as Geraint had wished.  
And Arthur loved Geraint, who in these years,  
Frequenting knightly jousts and tournaments,  
And all encounters of the lance and shield  
And singing sword, ever from all forthbare  
The golden eagles on the field of green

Victorious, until a name was his  
Upon men's tongues, of the Unvanquished  
Knight,  
The Prince of Many Battles, and his deeds  
The length and breadth of Britain were retold,  
And swelling like a wave, his fame was flung  
Against the outermost marches of the land.

Then in the fourth year, at the Whitsuntide  
Again at old Caerlleon-upon-Usk,  
King Arthur held his court, and there to him,  
Upon a day, rode two men full of years,  
Entered the audience-hall, and bowed and said:  
"Hail to thee, Lord of Britain! We are come  
From thy true vassal, Erbin, King of Devon;  
He greets thee as his nephew and his lord,  
And asks thy hearkening to his word of need  
Which we declare. The feebleness of age  
Is on the king, and knowing this, the chiefs  
Whose lands do neighbor his are insolent  
And covetous grown, and with impunity  
Harass his borders, and lay waste his towns,  
And ever set their boundaries farther forth.  
Erbin is old, and who hath dread of him?  
But Prince Geraint, his son, is strong with  
youth,  
A mighty warrior whose wide fame is flown  
Over the face of the kingdom. Wherefore,  
Sire,

Permit the son of Erbin to return  
Into his father's realm, that so may be  
Back-driven the fierce aggressor, the desire  
Of the covetous, plucked from him, and restored  
The boundaries of the kingdom. This, the  
prayer  
Which Erbin sends thee in his hour of need."

To which said Arthur: "And the prayer is  
just.  
And though, for mine own sake, I would have  
wished  
The word to come for some less glorious knight  
Than Prince Geraint, whose valiance hath no  
peer,  
The justice of the plea none can deny.  
Go ye, take food and wine, refresh yourselves  
Of your fatigues, and this same day return,  
And Prince Geraint shall follow you to-morn."  
Joyfully the ambassadors retired.

Then summoning the prince, King Arthur told  
The message sent from Devon; and Geraint,  
Although regretful that he must forgo  
The noble fellowship of that fair court,  
And, before all, the daily intimacy  
And close communion with the King he loved,  
Looked to his duty and his father's wrongs,  
And cheerfully made provision to depart.

And the next morning at the hour of prime,  
While the court cried farewells, and Guenevere  
Made sorrow for the going of the friend  
Whom best she loved, forth from Caerlleon's  
gates

Rode Prince Geraint and Enid, and with them,  
A gallant retinue of five score knights;  
Among them such as Sir Bedvere the Brave,  
Who, in an after year, beyond the sea  
Fighting for Arthur through the lines of Rome,  
At Bayonne found a tomb; and Peredur,  
The seventh son of Evrawc of the North,  
A breaker of enchantments; bold Sir Howel,  
Kinsman of Arthur, unto whom was given  
Lordship in Brittany; that noble knight,  
The greatest of the sons of Pellinore,  
Sir Lamorak de Galis, to be slain  
By Gawain's evil brethren traitorly;  
And, of a semblant frank and debonair,  
Hiding an envious treason in his heart  
Which yet had found no outlet, Honolan.

Never a fairer host was seen to pass  
Over the Severn, journeying towards the south.  
Two days they traveled over hills and slopes,  
Through forests and wide laundes, by shining  
streams,  
And on the third day, in the blaze of noon,

Rode into Carnant, walled and towered and  
spired,

King Erbin's capital city, where he lay

In a strong fortress till his son should come.

Then were bells rung in gladness and the folk

Shouted and wept for joy, and crowded close

To touch the housings of Geraint's destrier,

Crying that their own prince was come again.

And through streets hung with tapestries and  
scarves

Of coloured silks, and banners of the king,

And strown with reeds and mint and iris-flower,

Geraint and Enid with their train of knights

Passed to the fortress, where King Erbin gave

To all a royal welcome, to his son

Honours and blessings, and to that son's wife,

Whom then first he beheld, a father's love,

Not only for her peerlessness of charm,

But for her noble clarity of soul;

And ever he loved her as his own fair child,

And ever in her he had exceeding pride.

Then upon Erbin's foes Geraint made war,

Swift and retributive, and vanquished them,

Back-drove the fierce aggressor, the desire

Of the covetous plucked from him, and restored

The boundaries of the kingdom. And with  
peace

Came order and prosperity where had been

Confusion and disaster, and the realm  
Felt the protection of the governing hand,  
And knew the kingly blood was warm again.  
And Erbin, of the great pride which he had  
In his son's warriorhood, transferred to him  
Daily such added power that he became  
Virtually, if not in name, the king,  
And vassals from far corners of the land  
Journeyed to do him homage as their lord.  
And like a generous man, Geraint enriched  
His friends, his nobles, and his gathering court  
With jewels and arms and steeds from Araby,  
And won a name for largesse, and renown  
As a most princely knight and knightly prince.  
And he let cry great tournaments, wherein  
He battled as the least conspicuous knight,  
And often masked his shield, that he might have  
No vantage from his name or from his fame,  
And all who came against him overbare;  
And when, at each day's closing, pursuivants  
Would bid the disguised champion unhelm,  
That so the victor of the field be known,  
Behold, it was Geraint! Thus, while his friends  
Rejoiced in his unfaltering force and skill,  
And Enid gloried in her matchless knight,  
And Arthur, in his palace to the north,  
Heard, and was gladdened by the noble tale,  
The prince's fame increased, until at last,  
In all the Devon-realm remained no man



Who dared oppose the arm of such renown.  
And then a change grew over Prince Geraint.

For as the mantle of the months was spread  
In riper, tawnier colours, and the grass  
At every roadside whitened with the fire  
And wasting weight of summer, in his halls  
Geraint began to linger casefully,  
For a time seeking minstrelsy and games;  
And found a pleasure in the tumblers' skill,  
Their leapings and their twistings, in the tilts  
At chess and tric-trac, and a new delight  
In the melodious languor of the viol,  
And psaltery and cithern, harp and rote,  
To which, in lowered voices, minstrels sang  
The lays of lovers of the long ago.  
And afterwards, resurgent, with each day  
More mighty, in his soul so strong a tide  
Of love for his fair wife began to rise  
That all his life was compassed by that love,  
And merged and utterly resolved in love —  
With Enid only, knew he any joy,  
To Enid only, did he give a thought,  
And all his hours he spent with her alone.  
And for the sake of her companionship,  
His harpers and his tumblers and his games  
He heard and saw no more; the noble sport  
Of hunting, and the knightly exercise  
Of joust and tournament he did forgo;

And for his nobles' good will had no care,  
Forsook his princely duties, and turned away  
The hearts of all the host of all his court.

Wherefore, while over-fast the summer aged  
To autumn's pathos of impermanence,  
While in the fretful winds of afternoon,  
Recurrently, a crescent minor wailed  
And died away and swelled and wailed again,  
Beginning to intone the time-old dirge  
For all the beauty that ere long must die,  
Like to the wind, but with more rapid wing,  
A rumor breathed across King Erbin's realm,  
At first the merest whisper, of which none  
Could tell the origin, save Honolan;  
But passed from ear to ear, from tongue to  
tongue,  
Gathering to more than whisper, at the last  
Blew with such violence that every churl  
On Erbin's farthest marches knew the tale,—  
How Prince Geraint had turned him recreant,  
How all his glorious force had fallen from him,  
How, from excessive love for his fair wife,  
The Prince of Many Battles had declined  
Into a silken lingerer in a bower,  
Sunk in a shameful lethargy, and content.  
And in unlowered voices, men began  
To jeer and scoff at him, to make his name  
A jest and soon a hissing, and to cry

Out against Enid as the cause of all.  
And Arthur, in his palace to the north,  
Heard, and lamented for his peerless knight;  
And Erbin heard and sorrowed for his son;  
And Enid heard and saddened for her lord,  
Tormented by unreasoning self-reproach;  
But Prince Geraint heard nothing, lost in love.

And Erbin said to Enid on a day,  
“It is not thy will, daughter, that our prince  
Forsake his name and fame for love of thee?”  
“Nay, sire,” said Enid, sadly, “I do swear  
Nothing more hateful is to me than this.”  
“Upon thee, then, my daughter, does it rest  
To tell the prince what people say of him,  
And rouse him to his knighthood once again.  
From thy lips will he hear it gentlest.”  
And Enid bowed her head in mute assent.  
And with each dawn that followed, she resolved  
To tell Geraint all ere the night should come;  
But such a dread she had of paining him,  
And such a delicacy of saying aught  
That would mean disapproval or dispraise,  
That each night fell to find all still untold.  
But what with the great love she had for him,  
And her great dolour for his lost renown,  
What with the anguish of her self-reproach,  
And the continual conflict with herself,  
The brightness of the colour in her cheek

Faded to pallor, and the shining light  
Of joy passed from her face, and to her eyes  
A shadow came, darkening day by day.

This change, so causeless seeming, Prince Geraint  
Perceived, and at it wondered, much distressed.  
Yet thinking that perchance some proof of love  
Had been by him omitted, which, though slight,  
Might be dear to a woman, he took pains  
To be still more the lover, to devise  
A hundred new ways to insure her joy;  
But maugre all his care — nay, as he thought,  
The more for all his care — he saw his wife  
Sadden and whiten with each added day.

At last one undertide, when the long beams  
Of sunlight, slanting through the pallid gold  
Of leaves just touched with autumn, on the floor  
Of Enid's bower a patterned shadow cast  
Through the tall, painted casement, as they sat  
And watched the shifting of the coloured glow,  
And she was pale and quiet, speaking not,  
He rose and came to her, and took the face  
He loved between his hands, and said to her:  
“So sad, so pale, my Enid! Why so sad?  
Thou knowest how well I love thee. Enid —  
thou —  
Dost thou not love me, Enid, any more?”

To which she answered, "Yea, so very well!"  
Yet drew away, and could not look at him,  
For in her heart she thought: "*Do* I love  
well?"

If I loved well would I not have the strength  
To tell him what the people say of him,  
Even, though doing so, I wounded sore?  
True love is strong; my love is weak, weak,  
weak!

I fear my love is not as true love is!"  
For this, her eyes were downcast, and her face  
Avert, her manner conscious and constrained.  
But to Geraint, who could not understand,  
There came an apprehension undefined,  
A sharp and sudden pang of formless dread;  
And with her words he was unsatisfied.  
And half in sorrow, half in wrath, he turned  
And left the bower, and while the palace-folk  
Gave silent place before him and exchanged  
Curious glances at his gloomy brow,  
He passed to a fair pleasaunce, cool and green,  
Hedged in with hawthorns and with beeches  
white;  
And there, upon the velvet of the turf,  
In a fierce restlessness paced to and fro.

Thither came Honolan, most curious  
Of all the curious watchers in the hall.  
"My lord," he said, "I know not if I come

Welcome or most unwelcome, but I saw  
The pain upon thy countenance and feared  
Some heavy evil had befallen thee;  
And having thy well-being at my heart  
Always, I thought to learn what woe is thine.”  
To which Geraint made answer with a groan  
Only, saying no word; but unabashed,  
Sir Honolan continued: “Nay, my prince,  
Why keep thy grief from me? Less hardly  
borne

Is sorrow that is shared with some true friend.  
And am I not of kindred soul with thee  
Even as of one blood? Shall kindred hopes  
And dreams not make me worthy of thy trust?”  
“I fain would think so,” answered Prince Geraint;

“Yea, I do think so, friend. But even to thee  
I am not certain should I speak of this —  
And yet, why not? I am half-mad with doubts,  
Questions which have no answers. What hath  
chanced

To make my wife so changed — so wan of hue,  
So saddened of demeanour? More than life,  
Than all life gives, I love her, as God knows!  
And in all ways have sought to prove my love!  
Why do I hear her sighing in the day?  
Why have I heard her weeping in the night?  
What reason can there be for such a change?”

Then smiled Sir Honolan, and in the smile  
Was that at which Geraint cried suddenly,  
“Thou knowest the reason! Speak! What  
dost thou know?”

But with a feigned disquiet, Honolan,  
Stammering, said, “My lord, command me not!  
I do but hazard guesses — wide, perchance.  
I pray thee ask me nothing.” But Geraint  
In one great fear returned, “What knowest  
thou?”

“Nothing I know,” said Honolan, “but this —  
If I must speak — this any one would think:  
When ladies weep, whose lords are by their side,  
Whose lords, unwarned, in tender care,  
Do set their every hope to pleasing them,  
To gratifying each small wish unnamed —  
In such fair circumstance when ladies weep,  
Perchance — I only say perchance, my lord,—  
They then bewEEP one absent.”

And Geraint

Stopped in his restless motion like a man  
Who, in the rout of battle, feels the quarrel  
Drive to the heart and turn him into stone.  
And it came to him he should slay this man,  
Like any unclean thing that drags its slime  
Across the good, the bright, the beautiful;  
And to his shame he knew he could not slay,

For both his arms were nerveless and unpow-  
ered,  
His will, no stronger than a broken reed ;  
And well he realized that this was due  
Not to the words in their self-singleness,  
But to the fact they closed so perfectly  
With that fierce, formless doubt, which, having  
had  
No import and no object, now had both.

“Thou meanest then —” and like a weight the  
pain  
Dragged at his speech — “What meaning,  
Honolan?  
Stay, tell me not! I know too well, too well!  
And though because thy lips could form those  
words,  
I think I should have slain thee with my hands,  
I must learn more. Who is the man she loves?  
Can thy guess cover him?”

“Mayhap not, lord ;  
But I can name thee one who sighs for her,  
As I dare swear,— one who in Arthur’s court  
Is called the favorite minstrel, Alarin  
The Faery-son. Hear while I tell thee that  
To which mine eyes were witness. Dost recall  
How, when returning from the very quest  
Which gave thee thy fair lady, in the wood



Beyond Caerlleon, Alarin and I  
Met you two coming? Well I call to mind  
Thy joy in love and in thy joy mine own! —  
Three years ago, three years! But I delay:  
When 'round the sudden turn of the wood-path,  
Ye twain came riding through the sunlit glade,  
At that first sight of thy sweet lady's face,  
How tense and hueless did our minstrel grow,  
Like one who hath a vision in his soul!  
How he did stare and stare! How pluck the  
strings

Of his forgotten harp until one brake,  
Whirring, beneath his hand! What look was  
his! —

Oh, never men look so save they do love!  
All this, my prince, saw I to my great grief.  
Ay, and the song he sang that very night  
When ye were wed! He had sung otherwise  
Before *my* bridal-board, I warrant thee!  
But thou, my lord, so deep in thy new love —  
How couldst thou see the double meaning in  
it? —

Love's House, built unto him, not unto thee!"

But all the while a passion of remorse  
Tortured Geraint; the words that fell so fast  
And glibly evil from the other's tongue,  
The very name of him toward whom had leaped  
His jealousy's first impulse — though he heard,

He heard them as far sounds that matter not,  
So dwarfed their brief significance was made  
By his own sense of overwhelming shame,  
In listening to what was surely false,  
In hearkening to a slander on his wife.  
And desperately he answered, like a man  
Who would convince himself before all men :  
“ It can not be! She is too good, too fair,  
Too gentle to be touched by any sin!  
Mire could not cling to her white purity!  
We wrong her, I and thou, by dreaming it.  
But mine is the immeasurable shame —  
I am her husband and her lover too —  
I never should have hearkened to a tale  
Wherein truth can not be! ”

“ Yea, even so,”

Said Honolan, “ I have not called it truth;  
I were as grieved as thou to have it proved.  
My love for thee, and thine insistence, lord,  
Only, urged me to speak and tell thee that  
Which at the least is certain — he loves her;  
That she loves him I make no certainty,  
And fain were I to think it most untrue.  
But this I know, as thou must also know,  
That three years work a change in many a  
dame,  
And harp-skilled fingers and a tuneful voice  
And words of faery melody have power

To bring the marriage-vow to pliancy;  
And singing she loves always, as all know.  
How often he sang to her! I have marked  
At the great festivals, how, when he sang,  
He might have been alone with her, so plain  
It was the song was meant for her alone!  
But thou, my lord, saw'st nothing, being in  
love."

And when Geraint said no word in reply,  
Gazing in moody silence at the ground,  
Sir Honolan went on, his voice more low,  
More soft, and with a covert malice in it:  
"And after all, my prince, what is this sin?  
Hath it not grown so common in these years  
It scarce is held a sin now any more?  
There is most noble precedent, my lord.  
What of the wife of Sir Segwarides,  
That good Earl of the South? And what of  
her,  
Our Arthur's sister, wife to Uriens  
Of Gore, Queen Morgan, loved by Accolon,  
And by how many others since his time?  
And Mark of Cornwall — can his kinglihood  
Avail to keep Isoud from Tristram's arms?  
And if we closelier come upon the throne,  
What do men say of Guenevere the Queen,  
Whose friendship thou didst suffer for thy  
wife —

Nay, didst encourage, lord? She, too, is fair,  
And once, I trow, was leal; yet every child  
That prattles of the great ones of the land  
Links Guenevere with Lancelot! And last,  
Is there no shadow on the throne itself?  
What of that tale of Arthur's earlier days,  
Whereof the wise man said a curse was born  
To blast the realm with ruin to an end? —  
Of Arthur and the lady with four sons,  
To whom a fifth —”

“Enough!” cried Prince Geraint,  
“Say no more, Honolan! Too much is said  
Already, and by far! I know the tale,  
Know all the tales thou tellest! — What *of*  
them?

Do they degrade my Enid to their fen?  
Rather do they exalt her to the sun,  
Her light of purity do magnify!  
My doubt is done, my manlessness is gone;  
I swear she is as stainless and as true  
As when I found her in her father's hall,  
A maiden with her soul bright in her eyes.

I will believe no falsity in her  
Until her own sweet lips proclaim it so!  
And had I the most faint distrust of thee,  
Did I suspect that thou wouldst spread this lie,  
Wouldst breathe a word of it to any one,  
I promise I should slay thee — yea, and should

Though brotherhood stood in our cousinship!  
I trust thee; give thou me no cause for doubt!"

And in a storm of self-wrath Prince Geraint  
Strode from the pleasaunce back to Enid's  
    bower;  
And found her there as he had left her — still  
And pale and very silent — yet so fair,  
Of such unequalled purity of line,  
That looking at the beautiful, white brow,  
Sorely he blamed him for his lack of faith,  
And in remorseful tenderness took oath  
That never would he doubt her any more.  
But that same night, as Honolan had known,  
The dread incertitude would rise again  
Despite the strongest setting of his will;  
And all the vague suspicions and the fears  
And questions he could not explain aside  
Returned to his tormenting, and he lay  
With neither sleep nor peace the long night  
    through,  
And not until the dawning slept at last.

But as the morning mounted in the east,  
The ripe autumnal sunshine, amber-hued,  
Streamed through the windows, rich with im-  
    agery,  
Full on the couch of Enid and Geraint.  
And Enid woke and saw the counterpane

Had slipped from off the prince's breast and  
arms,  
And bending over him, while still he slept,  
She gazed upon the sinewed brawn of breast  
And on the mighty muscles of his arms,  
Exulting in the grandeur of his mould.  
And then she seemed to hear the busy tongues  
Calling him recreant, in endless tales  
Of his unknighly lethargy and sloth;  
And all the gladness died within her heart,  
And all at once she wept and lowly said:

“How like a noble weapon is my lord!  
Like some rare glaive of finest-tempered steel,  
Which often in the fray hath tried its edge,  
And never brake nor turned nor showed a  
flaw! —  
Yet now in idleness is rust-consumed!  
Ah, God forgive me! Am I not the rust  
That hath consumed the valiance of my lord? —  
That makes him think no more of plunging  
steeds,  
Hauberk and pluméd helm, and blazoned shield,  
Driving of spear, sword-clanging, clapping  
hands,  
And glee of tourney, and all the glory of it?  
Through love of me is my great prince un-  
manned,  
Shorn of his honour, from his height is fallen,

And given for a prey to evil tongues.  
 The people call him recreant, but I —  
 I am the recreant! To me is due  
 The blame, the shame for loss of his renown!  
 And having wrought this treason, do I speak  
 To rouse him to his knightlihood again?  
 To tell him how in every laggard's talk  
 His hand is grown too weak to hold the sword,  
 His valour, thinned to craven apathy?  
 To remedy my treason, do I speak? —  
 Ay me! Ay me! Thus am I false indeed!"

And by a most unhappy circumstance,  
 Her tears fell on his breast, and he awoke  
 And found her weeping, and her last sad words  
 Rang in his ears, "Thus am I false indeed!"  
 And all the evil speech of Honolan,  
 And all his own suspicions and his fears  
 Boiled upward in his mind and seemed confirmed.  
 And power to reason that if she *were* false,  
 She had not so confessed it, he had none;  
 But like one mad he flung him from the couch  
 And stared at her, and like a madman cried,  
 "So, from thy very lips I learn a truth  
 I might have learned from others, had I thought  
 To put a credence in it!" Then he turned  
 And shouted to his squire, "Be quick! My  
     horse,  
 My arms, my lady's palfrey — ready them

With all the haste thou canst!" And to his  
wife

He spake with harsh command: "Do thou  
arise,

Array thee, for we go adventuring! —

What matter whither, so that we be gone?

So that I take thee far from courts and halls?

For I will root these fancies from thy heart,

And drive these wishful memories from thy soul,

And I will have thee with me till I die!"

And then a devil seemed to rise in him,

Prompting his words, for with a bitter smile

He added, "And if on this quest I die,

What grief to thee? Easier then to seek

The company of him for whom thou weepest!"

But Enid, though in sorrowful amaze

Stung by the taunt she could not understand,

Met his gaze steadily: "My lord Geraint,

Thy meaning is a hidden thing to me."

And though he would have answered, "Search  
thy heart

For meaning!" the clear look within her eyes

Stayed his reproach, for in his soul he knew

Never a guilty woman could look so.

And fain would he have taken her in his arms,

And all their misery had ended then;

But such a storm of wrath and pride and shame

Possessed him that he could not, and he cried:

"I said, array thee! Do I speak in vain?"



Array thee in thy poorest, oldest gown,—  
Ay, even the satin one I saw thee wear  
When first I found thee in the ancient hall.  
Three years thou hast not worn it. Don it  
now,  
And come with me!”

And mutely Enid went  
And took the worn robe from the cedrine chest,  
And shook the flowers-of-balsam from the folds,  
And put it on, and the squire armed Geraint.  
Then silent each to other, they went forth  
Into the castle-courtyard, filled with folk  
Wondering at the story which was rife.  
And much of marvel at the prince's arms,  
At Enid's strange, worn raiment, at the dole  
On either's face, the knights and ladies made;  
But to Geraint none dared to say a word —  
Not even Honolan — so black he looked.  
But thither came King Erbin, and he said  
Full sorrowfully, “My son, what doest thou?  
Wilt thou ride forth with neither knight nor  
squire?  
Beyond our borders is a perilous land;  
Wilt thou endanger Enid and thyself?  
For thy wife's sake go not unretinued!”  
But Geraint answered, “Sire, it is my will.  
I pray thee do not seek to alter it.”  
And with no further word, he set his wife

Upon her dappled palfrey, he himself  
Mounted his bay destrier of Gascon breed,  
And from the palace-gates they went the way  
Which led to the great wilderness of the west.  
And Geraint said to Enid: "Do thou ride  
Before me always by a furlong's half,  
And whatsoever thou mayest see or hear,  
Saving I speak to thee, speak not to me!"  
And sadly she rode on as she was bid.

And in such wise did they depart from home;  
And all that from the courtyard watched them  
go  
Had but one thought, "They go unto their  
death!"

## II

THE noon had passed, and a grey bank of cloud,  
Rapidly mounting from the hazy south,  
Slipped o'er the westering sun, and spread beyond

Till all the heaven was mantled in dull grey,  
And all the landscape darkened. And a wind,  
Uprising, momentarily increased in force,  
And with a low, wild wailing swept across  
The waste wherethrough rode Enid and Geraint.

For Erbin's marches they had left behind,  
Long since the mellow harvest-fields had passed,  
The orchards, red and golden with ripe fruit,  
And all the peace and plenty of that fair realm;  
And now they rode in one vast, dreary plain,  
Where evenly on all sides the leaden sky  
Came down to the flat launde, with never break  
Of hill nor tree on which the eye could rest;  
Where nothing throve save thorny clumps of  
gorse,

And sweeps of heather powdered grey with dust;  
Where not a sound there was but of the wind,  
Crying of desolations and of death.  
And unto Enid, riding far before,

Half-sick with loneliness and wounded love,  
The grey monotony of earth and sky  
And the funereal music of the wind  
Became as an oppression, and grew and grew  
To horror definite, until at last  
Hardly could she refrain from riding back  
And crying to Geraint that they were  
doomed —

That they were caught between this sky and  
plain,

That they must ride forever upon this waste,  
Forever see the angry heaven lower  
Evenly to the launde, forever hear  
The wailing, the unearthly threne of wind! —  
But she rode on with neither cry nor word.

But deaf to wind, and blind to earth and sky,  
Conscious alone of memories that rent  
His mind with living torture, rode Geraint.  
Ever his thoughts went wandering to the  
past,—

A ruined hall, a ruddy sunset glow,  
A song down-floating through the violet dusk,  
A maiden of the fairness of a fay!  
And he had sworn to love the maiden well,  
To care for her as no man else could care,  
However worthier! He had invoked  
A punishment from Heaven should he fail  
But once in his great love's true tenderness! —

Then would he look where Enid rode before,  
And in remorseful anguish groan aloud.  
Another picture: ivy, and the white,  
Closed blooms of honeysuckles, and the dawn  
Shining in misty silver on a court  
Changed by Love's miracle into a shrine!  
And he, with soul exalted, had taken vow,  
By conduct ever nobler, knightlier,  
To prove Love's grace was not too ill bestowed,  
To prove, so far as any might deserve  
Such grace, he would deserve it by his life!  
Then did he *know* that Honolan had lied! —  
But why, but why, "Thus am I false indeed"?  
And not as knight-at-arms would think to ride,  
With head bowed on his breast, with body limp,  
Sunk forward in the saddle, rode Geraint  
Through unrecked hours of waste and grieving  
wind.

At last, above the launde, Enid beheld  
The far-off swaying of a shadowy line,  
And nearer saw a tangled coppice-wood.  
And gladly did her eyes rest on this break  
In the flatness of the plain, and she rode on,  
Watching the young trees bend before the wind.

Then was she ware that three armed horsemen  
lurked  
Close in the thicket-shadow, and as she drew

Nearer, the leader boasted to his men:  
"Behold, two horses and armour and a girl  
Come to us for the taking! Yonder knight —  
What man of spirit is he, that he hangs  
His head so heavily and rides behind?  
Easy to vanquish him, and mine the right  
To attack him first, seeing I saw him first."

And Enid heard and on her fell great fear.  
And she looked back and saw how Prince Geraint  
Did ride indeed with head sunk on his breast,  
Seeing and hearing nothing; and she thought,  
"He will be slain for he is off his guard!  
Before he can couch lance he will be slain!  
And yet he has forbidden me to speak!  
But herein is no silence; I *must* speak!"

And swiftly she rode back and spake to him:  
"My lord, three horsemen wait in yonder copse,  
And I have heard them plan thine overthrow."  
Then wrath with her it was not, but self-wrath  
Which made of her its victim, that caused Geraint  
To answer irritably, "Did I command  
Thy warning or thy silence? Did I say  
Speak, or speak not, saving I speak to thee?  
But ride apart, for yonder comes the first."

Hardly had Enid ridden to one side,  
 When, with lance couched, upon spur-maddened  
     steed,  
 The bandit leader rushed upon Geraint.  
 But while against the prince's shield, his lance  
 Shivered, Geraint's brake not, but with such  
     force  
 Struck on the center of the other's shield,  
 That wood and leather — ay, and mail be-  
     neath —  
 Alike were riven, and to a cubit's length  
 The spear passed through the body, and when  
     withdrawn,  
 Down from his plunging horse the foeman fell  
 And in a rush of blood his life outflowed.  
 Whereat the other horsemen both at once  
 Couched lances and bare down upon Geraint.  
 And at the golden eagles aimed the first,  
 But his arm wavering, the lance went wide,  
 And ere he could recover, such a blow  
 Geraint dealt on his helm that in a swoon  
 To earth he hurtled and lay as he were dead.  
 And fearful lest the fate of his two friends  
 Be also his, the third knight turned and fled  
 For shelter towards the coppice, but Geraint,  
 Pursuing, overtook him, and on the shield  
 Struck him so mightfully that from his horse  
 The bandit fell and lay a moment stunned,  
 Then rose and fled on foot, at which the prince,

Scorning to follow, suffered him to escape.  
But the three horses of his vanquished foes  
Geraint bound all together by their reins,  
And gave the reins to Enid, saying to her,  
“ Ride onward now and drive these steeds before ;  
And say no word, but if I speak to thee ! ”  
And forward through the plain she drove the three ;  
And one was black, and one was white, and one  
Was dapple-grey.

They passed the coppice-wood,  
Journeying towards the swaying, shadowy line.  
And slowly into dusk the sad day waned,  
And tightlier seemed the ominous sky to close  
Down on the barren moors, and with the voice  
Of all the souls in Annwyn cried the wind.  
At length to Enid, straining through the gloom,  
The line mysterious resolved itself  
Into a forest of such vast extent  
That neither end nor boundary could she see  
Save on the side before her, and the trees  
Loomed darkling to the heavens, and in the wind  
She saw the mighty branches twist and writhe  
Like limbs of tortured giants, and they seemed  
To her the symbols of a woe to come.

Then was she ware that five armed horsemen  
rode



Forth from the deeper shadows, and men of  
might

She saw they were, stalwart and huge of frame,  
Mounted on powerful chargers, and every man  
Had shield in place and spear in battle-rest.

And nearer drawing, Enid heard one say:

“Behold, at last a booty! Five good steeds,

And better yet, a lady! And no one

To guard them but yon craven of a knight,

Who, weaker than his woman, slinks behind! —

Sir Dolourous, whom any boy could slay!”

To which another made a loud reply,

“The lady we hold in common, but the  
knight —

His life, his horse, his armour — shall be mine!

Wherefore I make requiring of you all,

That I be given the first encounter with him.”

Fearful indeed was Enid, hearing them.

And through the gloom she looked back to Ge-  
raint,

And saw him bent above the saddle-bow,

Seeing and hearing nothing; and she thought,

“Surely will he be slain before mine eyes!

For he is wearied by the former fray,

And now, while off his guard, these five will come

Against him all defenseless! Not to speak

Is but to join the five in slaying him!”

Then swiftly back along the bridle-path,  
She drove the snorting horses, and she cried  
In voice made shrill by fear, "My lord, yon  
knights  
Purpose thy death; I heard them plotting it.  
And they are five and thou art only one!"

But angrily and bitterly Geraint  
Smiled on her misery: "And once again  
My wishes go unheeded! I declare  
To Heaven that their purpose grieves me less  
Than thy continual disobedience.  
But ride apart: I battle with the first."

Then down upon the prince the first knight  
spurred;  
But never had Geraint's hand been more firm,  
His aim more sure and steady! Swift and  
hard  
He smote the other's shield, that 'neath the blow  
It crumpled like old parchment, the lance flew  
Far from his foeman's grasp, his stirrups brake,  
Wounded and senseless was he dashed to earth.  
The second came, and furiously Geraint  
Thrust the long spear-head through the ringéd  
mail  
Into his enemy's neck, that the sharp blade  
Protruded at the back, and when wrenched  
forth,

Two spouting blood-streams washed the life  
away.

Then setting spurs to his own horse, the prince,  
With thunder-sound of onset, met the third,  
And dealt him such a blow upon the shield,  
That from the shock both horse and man were  
hurled

Backwards, flat to the earth, and though the  
steed

Arose, the rider could not, crushed to death.  
At which in fear, the two remaining fled,  
Hoping to reach the forest; but Geraint  
Pursued and overtook them, and his lance  
Struck on the nearer's heavy shoulder-arms,  
And cracked the armour, but the lance itself,  
Strained in six former frays, brake to the haft.  
Whereat both bandits drew their swords, and  
both

Attacked the prince, who with his own true  
glaive

Received them valiantly; and while the dark  
Settled upon them and their figures grew  
Indefinite in outline, that to her  
Who watched with eyes dilated, now one seemed  
Geraint, and now another, for a space  
They did sharp battle, stroke and counter-  
stroke,  
Tracing, traversing, matching foyne with  
foyne,

Until at last on one assailant's helm,  
Geraint brought down so mightily his blade,  
That helm and bone and brain alike were riven,  
And stiffly, like a stone, the dead man fell.  
And in a mortal terror the fifth knight  
Slipped from his horse, his lance and sword and  
shield

He flung away, and fell upon his knees,  
And stretched his hands in supplicance to Geraint,  
Shrieking, "Thy mercy, lord!" And half in  
scorn

And half in ruth according him the boon,  
Geraint dismounted, took the other's lance,  
Then caught the five great chargers, and all five  
Binding together by the bridle-reins,  
He gave the reins to Enid, saying to her:  
"As with the three, so drive the eight before;  
And though it seems my words have little  
weight,

This time I charge thee with especial force,  
Saving I speak to thee, speak not to me!"

Then in the moonless, black, wind-raving night  
They entered that great forest and they rode  
In murky labyrinths of shadowy trunks,  
Just visible by trebled blacknesses.  
And in their faces slanting sheets of rain  
Were driven through the canopy of leaves;

And the night grew in violence, with the brief  
Brilliance of lightnings, and long thunder-rolls ;  
While often the deep forest found a tongue,  
And spake in snap and crash of breaking  
boughs,

And roar when roots gave way and giants fell,  
Crushing their neighbors downwards in the fall.  
And always in wild cadences that rose  
And died away to swell to mightier sound,  
Through twice ten thousand tree-tops the  
storm-wind

Sang with stupendous music, voice of God,  
Of all the world, of angels, or of Hell.

Then riding up to Enid's side, Geraint  
Saw the great difficulty which she had  
In driving the eight horses through the wood,  
By reason of the maze of nebulous trunks,  
And by the chargers' terror of the storm.  
And insofar as wrath would suffer him,  
The prince was moved to sorrow for her plight ;  
And he said to her, " Lady, it is vain  
To attempt going forward. It were best  
To bide here till the dawn." " As thou wilt,  
lord,"

Said Enid. And Geraint, dismounting, took  
Enid down from her palfrey, and they sought  
A refuge from the wind and from the rain  
Beneath the branches of a huge old tree ;

And Geraint said, "Sleep, lady; I will watch."  
"Nay, lord," made answer Enid, "thou art  
worn

And battle-weary. Thou hast need for rest.  
Sleep thou, and I will watch." And deeply  
touched

He was by her concern and tenderness;  
Yet such a tumult still of wrath and pride  
Made riot in his heart, that not one word  
Could he say in reply, and like one dumb  
He lay down in his armour and he slept.  
And neither food nor drink they had that night.  
And all night long, the storm encompassing her,  
While Geraint slept unmindful of the din,  
Enid kept watch, and in her hands she held  
The reins of the ten horses; but at last  
In early morning, the rain fell no more,  
And the wind died, and on the wood was peace;  
And lifting tired eyes to the brightening sky,  
With a wan gladness Enid saw the dawn  
Come to the world, and the new dawn was fair.

Then in that first thin light Geraint awoke;  
And he was startled by the weariness,  
The pallor on Enid's face, and secretly  
A great fear grappled him lest she should die.  
But he said only, "Now shall we proceed."  
And Enid said no word of her fatigue,  
And of their hunger-faintness neither spake.

So they rode onward through the wood, in front  
Enid with the eight chargers ; and they fared  
By coverts dense and sapling-serried dells,  
Where from close, leafy branches, the night's rain  
Showered on them as they passed ; and much be-  
held

Of ravage of the storm, in scattered limbs  
And riven trunks and stalwart trees uptorn.  
And they rode on until the tempest-zone  
They left behind, the débris saw no more,  
And through a sparser growth they made their  
way,  
Until what time the sun had reached the height  
Of the second hour, emerging from the wood,  
They came unto a valley very fair.

And there they saw a shining river flow  
On sands so yellow surely they were gold ;  
And crystal-clear the water, that like jewels,  
The many-coloured pebbles of the bed,  
Bright in the depths, flung back the morning  
sun ;

And by the rivage lacy willows grew,  
Their slender leaves tinged with autumnal gold.  
And on the river's farther side they saw  
Ripe fields of grain, and reapers reaping it,  
While far beyond arose the towers and spires  
Of a fair city ringed with radiant walls.  
And all the land lay shimmering in the haze

Of autumn's amber sunshine ; like a band  
Of flowing gold and crystal was the stream,  
Like fields of rippling gold, the feathery grain,  
And seeming through the fall of glamorous  
light

To tremble like a fleeting loveliness,  
Fairer for evanescence, yonder towers  
Were as a faery city, beautiful  
Beyond the beauty earthly hands may build. .

Down to the stream rode Enid and Geraint ;  
And eagerly the horses bent and drank  
Of the clear water. Then at a wide ford,  
They crossed the river, by a lofty steep  
Ascending to the fields of golden grain.  
And there they met a young squire clad in  
brown,

A leathern satchel hanging from his neck,  
A pitcher of bright blue within his hand,  
Upon the pitcher's mouth, a bright blue bowl,  
Around the rim whereof a cordon ran  
Of small, white, dancing figures, youths and  
maids.

With courtesy the squire saluted them.  
" May Heaven prosper thee," replied Geraint,  
" And pray, whence comest thou? " " I come,"  
he said,  
" From yonder shining city. And thou, lord —



Were it presumptuous in me to ask  
Whence thou art come? ” “ Nay, friend,” re-  
turned the prince,  
“ We came through the great forest.” “ Not  
to-day  
Have ye traversed that forest. It must be  
Ye spent last night therein.” “ Ay, even so.”  
“ Then neither food nor drink ye had, I ween.  
But in this pitcher is a sweet red wine,  
And in this satchel have I meat and bread.  
Wherefore, my lord, take now a meal from me  
And do me honour.” “ Gently said, young sir,  
But will no one go hungered? ” asked Geraint.  
“ The reapers, yea ; but gladly will I fetch  
Another breakfast for them. Do thou eat,  
And thy fair lady whom I see so pale.”  
“ We will,” returned Geraint, “ and Heaven re-  
ward  
Thy thoughtful courtesy ! ”

Whereat the prince  
Dismounted and took Enid from her horse.  
And they sat down, and skilfully the squire  
Served them with bread and meat and sweet red  
wine.  
And a faint colour crept to Enid’s cheek,  
By which Geraint was gladdened. The meal  
done,

The squire said with all deference, "My lord,  
If thou wilt now permit me, I will go  
To fetch the reapers' breakfast." "Yea, fair  
youth,"

Replied the prince, "go thou, and take for us  
The city's choicest lodging, and good space  
Of stabling for the horses, and return  
And so conduct us thither. And to requite  
Thy service and thy gift, whichever steed  
Pleases thee most, make choice of for thine  
own."

Then the squire flushed with pleasure, and he  
sank

On one knee to Geraint: "My lord, *thy* gift  
Would amply pay ten services like mine."  
And choosing joyfully the dapple-grey,  
He galloped to the city, and secured  
The best and richest lodgings that he knew,  
And stabling for the horses. Then he filled  
His satchel once again with reapers' fare,  
His cruse with wine; and afterwards he went  
Into the palace of his lord, Earl Dwinne,  
And told him the adventure. "I go now,  
My lord," he said, "to squire them to the town,  
This knight and his fair lady." Spake the  
earl:

"Thou sayest the lady is so very fair?  
Conduct them hither! I would welcome them,  
And fitly entertain them in my hall."

So the youth swiftly bare to Prince Geraint  
The welcome of Earl Dwinne to court and hall.  
But Geraint answered: "Not to court nor hall  
Will we go, by my faith! We know too much  
Of halls and courts, and folk who loiter there!  
Only to our own lodgings will we go;  
And if Earl Dwinne would greet me, let him  
come

And visit me; I will not visit him."

Then went they to the city, and they had  
Fair, roomy chambers, hung with scarlet silks,  
And spread with green, new rushes. And the  
seats,

Couches and tables were of carven oak,  
Covered with silver damask. And Geraint  
Said to the squire, "Unarm me, friend, then go;  
But eveningwards return to wait on me."  
Thereon the squire departed, and the prince  
Spake unto Enid, "If thou hast the need  
Of service, call the woman of the house."  
"I shall, lord," answered Enid. And Geraint  
Lay down upon a couch and soon he slept.  
And Enid also slept, but brokenly,  
Too over-wearied for a perfect rest.

So in late undertide the squire returned  
To attend on Geraint, who bade him give  
The landlord order that he make a feast  
Of best and costliest fare, and that he ask

Whatever friends he would to come and be  
The prince's guests. And princely was the  
feast

Which Geraint held that night, choice was the  
food,

Age-mellowéd the wine, and all was light  
Of tapers and of torches, and the sheen  
Of silver plates and chalices of gold.

But in the heart of Enid was small joy;  
And she arose and left the glittering board,  
And the gay company which heeded not,  
And in the farthest corner of the room  
Found a low bench, and there she sat alone.

Thereon behold, into the festival,  
With twelve tall knights behind him, came Earl  
Dwinne,

A slender, small gallant, too delicate  
Of form and feature for a man, and pale  
With the unhealthy pallor which long years  
Of revelries and ranging lusts do give.  
And with magnificence was Dwinne arrayed  
In azure velvet with a dust of pearls,  
His mantle, purfled with white ostrich plumes,  
The scabbard of his sword, one blaze of fire  
From rubies sewn in patterns of the rose;  
And clad in yellow satin, his twelve knights  
In scabbards of black damask ware their  
swords.

Then Prince Geraint arose, and courteously  
Welcomed the earl, who with an easy grace  
Made fair rejoinder, "Heaven keep thee, lord."  
And even as he did so looked beyond,  
And saw where Enid drooped, alone and sad.  
Then in their precedence they all sat down  
And lifted high the cups and drank, and ate.  
And Dwinne made inquiry of the prince's  
quest —

The object of his journey — but Geraint  
Was silent for a moment, and his brow  
Darkened with the old cloud of jealous pain,  
Ere briefly he responded: "I have none  
Saving to seek adventures and to ride  
Whither my humour leads me." "Rightly said,  
My lord!" cried Dwinne. "Chance purposes  
are best!

Fixed purpose is a tyrant! To thy health  
And good adventuring!" And all drank deep;  
But none could drink more freely than the earl,  
And none could jest more lightly, gailier sing  
A drinking-song, and song and jest he made,  
Until what with the glowing wine and lights  
And ringing words and laughter, Prince Geraint

Forgot his wrath and sorrow, entertained  
So very well he was. And he saw not  
How evermore the glances of the earl  
Returned to rest on Enid; but she saw,

Blushing for shame at their unmasked desire.

So sped the time in joyance, till a troop  
Of minstrels entered, bearing lute and harp  
And violin, and sweetly played and sang.  
Then, on a sudden thought, Dwinne seized a  
lute

From out the player's hand, and touched the  
strings

To low-toned, yearning music, and a song  
He fashioned of the fleeting of delight:

“Cull thou the day! How could I trulier sing  
Than bidding every one who hears forbear  
To waste the heart in futile questioning  
After the riddled Whither and the Where,  
Since than this moment is what goodlier thing?  
Wherefore, Belovéd, mourn not utterly;  
While Time shall last a little, love have we.

“Grasp the sweet hour! Bethink thee, it will pass,  
And what shall come hereafter no man knows;  
Already the long shadows bar the grass,  
Already creeps the witherance on the rose,  
And swift the sands heap in the nether glass.  
Wherefore thy smile, Belovéd, since the sheaf  
Of years is small for joy, too small for grief.

“Cling to the now! What madness to explore  
With sightless eyes the unlit ways that wend  
All to one blackness at the Future's shore!

That unto all things earthly is an end,  
Of this alone is certainty; wherefore  
Give me delight, Belovéd, since the day  
Comes soon when all delight shall pass away."

Then for a moment the bright revelry  
Was clouded with a sadness, which Earl Dwinne  
Shattered with laughter, crying, "Truth in  
wine!

And therein let us drown it! Know the  
truth —

Ay, speak the truth — but drown the truth in  
wine! "

And once again they lifted high their cups,  
And each man pledged his neighbor, and they  
drank,

And the wine filled their veins with flowing fire  
And beat within their temples; and they drank,  
Finding in wine forgetfulness of the song.

But Enid thought, "Why sing the song to  
me? "

And when all were their merriest, the earl  
Said to Geraint, "Wilt thou permit me, lord,  
To speak with yonder lady? For thy sake  
I fain would lay my service at her feet."

"Gladly, fair friend," replied the prince, and  
Dwinne,

Thanking him, went and sat by Enid's side;

And two spear-lengths they were from Prince  
Geraint.

And under cover of the clamorous tongues  
And strains of manifold music, speaking low,  
Said Dwinne to Enid: "Hearing the song I  
sang,

Thou knewest it was for thee. Thou only art  
My soul's desire in whom is my delight!"

But Enid, with sweet statelihood and grace,  
Though paling at the lust in his regard,  
Answered, "My lord, thou doest thyself a  
wrong

No less than me, in uttering such words  
To which I will not hearken in any wise."

Said Dwinne, "Consider well! Rather wouldst  
thou

Then, lady, follow a man who loves thee not  
Than bide with one who loves thee as his life?"  
But Enid, though the words smote on her heart  
With forceful pain, responded, "With my lord  
Rather would I go always — with my knight,  
My first love and my last, who loves me well —  
Yea, spite of all, I know he loves me well!"

Whereto said Dwinne: "Nay, is his love so  
great?

His treatment of thee sounds another tale.  
Thou art a gentlewoman, reared to rank



And tenderest usage, and of feature fair  
Beyond my thought of women. Not for thee  
Should paths be rough and wounding; yet this  
man

Drags thee perforce upon an aimless quest,  
That hath no profit but only peril in it,  
And to the pressure of any evil chance  
Subjects thee needlessly, just at his will!  
But I would guard thee in fair pleasaunces,  
Laced in with roses yellow as the sun,  
And make thy life no heavier than a dream  
Couched upon swan's-down, balmed with musk  
and myrrh.

He loves thee well! Yet silken stuffs of green  
Are in his coat and surcoat; green and gold,  
The plumes upon his helmet; and his mail  
Is of a triple steel inwrought with gold.  
Oh, never knight-at-arms more gay than he! —  
And never beggar-woman, more than thou!  
But I will clothe thee in the finest vair  
The furriers have for queenhood; ciselatons,  
Scarlets and Alexandrian brocades —  
All these shall be for thee when thou art mine.  
Lo, how he loves thee! Neither youth nor maid  
He gives for thine attendance; thine own hands  
Must do each several task, however mean —  
His lady to a serving-wench constrained!  
But in my palace are there youths and  
maids,—

A hundred, and not one but is most fair,  
A hundred, and not one but gently born —  
And all shall call thee 'Lady,' and be thine.  
Leave him and come with me! I love thee so!  
Thy hair is as a brightness to my soul  
Whereto is seldom brightness! Stay with me,  
And I will cherish thee for evermore!"

But Enid said: "Shall I not go with him  
In whom is my affianced and my trust,  
For whom is all the love that I shall know?  
These things thou sayest, O my lord, are true;  
And why these things are true I can not tell;  
And that these things are true drags at my  
heart.

And yet because my love is such a strength,  
With him must I go always to the end.  
And since it is so, for thy knighthood's sake,  
Let us depart in peace!"

"By God!" cried Dwinne,  
And though his tones were low, his burning eyes  
Consumed her with their passion, "If I do,  
Without one clasping of thy loveliness,  
Then may my foemen slay me in my hall,  
Mine earldom pass to strangers! Harken  
thou!

Thee I will have, won by whatever means!  
Unarmed is yonder man; a single word —

My twelve knights flesh their swords within his  
breast;  
And while his head turns carrion on my walls —  
A shuddering and a horror — thou shalt be,  
Whether thou wilt or no, my latest bride,  
The fairest of all ladies I have seen —  
I never knew a face could be so fair.  
But so thou comest to me willingly,  
I will not slay this man, nor prison him:  
He shall go free.”

Then like to one who gropes  
Through an enshrouding blackness, through his  
words

Did Enid grope, already in her eyes  
The vision of Geraint pale in his blood;  
And only could she think, “He will be slain!  
How shall my lord, unarmed, contend with  
twelve?

Ay, were he armed, he would be slain by  
twelve!”

And then her woman’s wit devised a way,  
And she made answer: “Lord, thy will is mine.  
Come with the morrowing and take me hence.  
But for to-night I pray thee let me be.  
Small pleasure wouldst thou have of me to-  
night;

For I am like to swoon of my fatigues,  
For on me is a lethargy like death.”

Arose Earl Dwinne and bowed and took his  
leave,

And all his knights went with him, with the rout  
Of townsmen following, that so the room  
Cleared quickly, and again they were alone,  
Geraint and Enid. And because she thought,  
“To speak now of the treachery of Dwinne  
Were needlessly to rob my lord of rest,  
Which he must have to battle with the foes  
Who in these lands beset us everywhere,”

Enid said naught of peril at that time,  
And wordlessly Geraint lay down and slept.  
But lest she overlie the hour for flight,  
Enid fought sleep, and noiselessly she placed  
At Geraint's side his armour, piece by piece,  
As he should don it. And the night wore on,  
And still she kept her vigil; but so tired  
She was with dole and unaccustomed toils  
That all unwittingly her head sank low —  
She slept and dreamed, and in her dream she  
seemed

To hear the beat of hoofs innumerable  
Of fast-pursuing steeds and clang of arms;  
And in affright she started up and stared  
Wildly about, and saw the east was grey,  
Slit with the red line of an angry dawn;  
And down the stony streets the heavy carts  
Went to bring in the harvest, rumbling loud  
Upon the paving-stones,— the pound of hoofs

And din of arms which she had heard in dream.  
Then smiling wanly at such fantasies,  
She stole to Geraint's couch, and placed her  
hand

Lightly upon his brow, awakening him,  
And whisperingly she said, "Arise, my lord,  
And arm thyself before it be too late."  
And when he did so, wondering at her words,  
She told him all the traitorous speech of Dwinne  
And her own answer.

Quickly then Geraint,  
Calling his host, required the reckoning.  
"Thou owest me but little," said the man.  
"Will seven chargers pay thee?" "Truly,  
lord,  
One were too much." "Take seven," said the  
prince,  
"And bring our own two horses to the door.  
And wilt thou guide us to the city walls?  
I would depart from town a different way  
From that by which I entered." "Noble sir,  
My will is but to serve thee," he returned.

So through the twilight of the tortuous streets  
He guided them, and through the western gate,  
From which outled a highroad. There Geraint  
Dismissed him, saying: "Our great thanks,  
good friend!

Need of thy farther guidance have we none.  
Farewell and Heaven keep thee!" "And keep  
thee,

My lord, and thy fair lady!" said the host,  
And left them, with a glad heart hastening  
home.

But when he reached his house, surrounding it  
He saw the twelve chief knights of the Earl  
Dwinne,

Mounted on snorting horses, men and steeds  
Clad all in heavy armour, and each knight  
Bare a long lance of battle. And he saw  
The earl's proud charger at the mounting-  
stage,

Champing his golden snaffle. And the earl  
Rushed from the entrance, crying, "They are  
gone!"

Then saw the trembling landlord, ran to him,  
With sword uplifted forced him to his knees:  
"Thou villain, didst thou suffer them to es-  
cape?"

"Ah, my lord earl, I had no word from thee  
That I restrain them." "Which way did they  
go?"

"Forth by the western highroad." And Earl  
Dwinne

Into his saddle sprang, dashed deep the rowels,  
Brandished his naked sword above his head,  
And shouting "Follow!" at a speed that recked

Nothing of others' lives nor of his own,  
Galloped through street and square and gate,  
and rode

Until far in the distance he beheld  
Two moving figures, Enid and Geraint;  
And his own shout of triumph was twelve times  
Multiplied as his knights rushed to the prey.

And Enid, by Geraint's will riding first,  
Heard the fierce clamor, distance-thinned yet  
clear;

And looking back she saw a dust-cloud roll  
Rapidly down the highroad, and the forms  
Of furious riders loomed within the mist,  
Their armour glinting fitfully. Then in dread  
Greater than aught she yet had known, she  
turned

And rode back to Geraint, crying aloud,  
"My lord, my lord, defend thee, for they come!  
The host of Dwinne will hew thee to thy  
death!"

And suddenly Geraint wheeled his destrier  
To face his foes and feutred fast his lance.  
And in the moment on him seven knights  
Bare headlong, captained by the seneschal  
Of the earl's household. But the mighty  
charge  
Steadfastly he received, that like a wave

Which hurls its thunderous volume on a rock,  
And can not move it, and the wave is split,  
And all its force is spent in impotent spray  
Which swirls and eddies harmlessly beyond,  
They split upon his firmness and swirled by,  
But leaderless, for at his stirrup dragged  
The seneschal, face downwards in the dust.  
And Geraint wheeled and spurred into the midst  
Of the returning seven, and with seven  
At once he did engage, thrilling with lance,  
Slashing with pitiless sword, that evermore  
They yielded ground before him, for like those  
About whom olden legends hang, he fought —  
Like Eldol, Earl of Gloucester, with the blades  
Of treachery contending, or like him  
Before whose single sword battalions fell,  
Rhuvawn, the chief of kings. So fought Geraint  
Till of the seven only three remained  
To fight ever again, and gaping wounds  
They had, all three, and in a common fear  
They quailed beneath the warrior's circling  
sword,  
And cowered before the eagles on his shield,  
And fled back to their master.

Then the wrath  
Of Dwinne was changed to fury. Hard he  
drave



Into his charger's side the maddening spur  
And whirlwind-violent lashed upon Geraint.  
But like the slenderest reed by autumn meres  
His lance brake on the prince's stubborn shield,  
Splintering to his fingers, while Geraint's,  
Mightfully thrust and surely, cleft in twain  
The attacker's shield, rent wide his useless mail,  
Entered his body to a mortal hurt,  
And with a sharp scream Dwinne threw out his  
arms

And fell from his horse, dead. Whereat his  
knights,

Wounded and those unwounded, flung away  
Their weapons, and dismounting, came and  
knelt

Before the victor, saying, "Mercy, lord!"  
And merciful was Geraint, and rode aside  
And said to Enid, "Do we now proceed."  
So on the highway they rode forth again.

But sadly, with much weeping, did the knights  
Place their dead master on a shield's reverse,  
And bear him to his city. Thus died Dwinne,  
By his own lorded passions slain at last,  
Earl Dwinne, yet in the summer-flush of youth.

### III

WITH a fierce brightness the autumnal sun  
Blazed at an hour to noon, when, journeying  
fast

Along the highroad, Enid and Geraint  
The slain earl's ultimate marches overfared,  
And saw below them a low range of hills,  
Green, greenish-brown, and tending into grey.  
These climbing, from the summit they beheld  
A valley fair and wide, of fertile fields  
Russet and gold with harvest, wherein folk  
Reaped grain or gathered fruits, and through  
the vale,

Rushing and roaring like a storm, a stream  
Tumbled the liquid thunder of a flood  
Hued black and livid by the sombre rocks  
Of its deep bed. And windingly the road  
Descended to the valley, there in twain  
Dividing, of which one, with gradual grade,  
Ribbioned the low flank of the farther hills;  
Whereas the other, level, broad and straight,  
Ran to a bridge of heavy masonry,  
Spanning the river, and above the bridge,  
Upon the opposite side of that dark stream,  
They saw a fair, strong castle, massive-walled,

High-towered and widely-moated, and they  
thought  
No man had builded better than the lord  
Who reared this so fair fortress.

Then they rode  
Down from the hill-top and approached the  
place

Where the two highways parted, and they saw  
A peasant toiling in a field close by,  
Sheaving the grain. To him spake Prince Geraint:

"Tell me, I pray thee, who thy liege lord is,  
Lord likewise of this valley and of yon towers."

"A king, Guivret the Little," said the man,

"And a most valiant champion. Wherefore,  
sir,

I warn thee shouldst thou choose the lower road  
And cross the bridge and ride beneath his walls,  
Thy lot were like to be disgrace and shame,  
Since every knight who comes upon his lands  
He forces to a combat, and not one  
But in the end must yield him to my king."

"Nevertheless, by that way will I go,"

Replied Geraint, and Enid riding first,  
They crossed the bridge and passed beneath the  
towers.

But when they had proceeded a short space,

The thud of iron-shod hoofs smote on their  
ears,

A voice behind them cried, "Oh, keep thee,  
knight!

For thy presumption shalt thou dearly pay,  
Daring to enter these forbidden lands!"

And Geraint, turning, set his lance in rest.

And lo, upon a war horse great and strong,

Dark bay in colour, nostrils scarlet-wide,

A knight who ware above his shining mail

A silken surcoat of the colour of Inde,

Rushed towards him, and the prince had never  
seen

A man of smaller stature than this knight.

And at such fearful pace the charger came

That finer than a millstone grinds the corn,

He ground the stones beneath his clanging  
hoofs,

And sparks flew outward from him like a fire;

And backwards in the wind of that wild speed

Were borne the milk-white plumes of the  
knight's crest

And the blue pennon streaming from his lance;

And to the blazon on his dark blue shield,

An argent lion couchant, leaping life

Seemed by that headlong motion to be given.

Then Geraint spurred to meet him, and the  
shock

Of their encountering was so merciless  
That both their steeds were beaten to the earth.  
They rose and charged again, and yet again,  
With iron-tipped lances gave such fearful  
    strokes,  
Each to the other, that they rased away  
The paintures and the colours from their  
    shields;  
And often through the leather and the wood  
The sharp spears drave, through plate and in-  
    ner mail,  
And pierced their bodies and made gaping  
    wounds;  
But always it was difficult for Geraint  
To battle with the other, whose small size  
Rendered sure aim scarce possible. They  
    fought  
Until both horses fell upon their knees  
From sheer exhaustion, and both knights were  
    thrown  
Heavily to the ground. But they arose,  
Despite their grievous hurts, and drew their  
    swords,  
Hurtling together fiercely, and on foot  
Fought stubbornly and long, until their shields  
Shielded no more, but splintered wood become,  
And fluttering rags of leather; and their arms  
Were crushed and hewed and hacked to the bare  
    flesh;

And they swayed both with weakness, and the  
light

Of the broad day grew darkness to their eyes,  
And a red vapor of blood. And all the while  
Enid looked on, with neither scream nor tear;  
/ For past all ease of weeping was her woe,  
And past all utterance. But on her face  
Was a grey rigor like to naught save death,  
And in her gaze, a straitness over-tense;  
And ever one hand kept clutching at her throat,  
Her fingers bruising red the soft, white flesh,  
And she not knowing it.

So they fought long,  
Till finally within the prince's mind,  
Blood-clouded, pain-distorted, a dim thought  
Unconsciously took form: "One stroke — my  
last!

If good, I live; if not,—" and all his strength,  
Or rather, the poor remnants of his strength,  
Summoning to him, like a thrower of dice  
Who stakes his all upon a single cast,  
He lifted high his blade, and such a blow  
Dealt on his foeman's helm that circlewise  
The sword flew from the hand of the Little  
King,  
And dizzily he slipped down to his knees.

Then in the curious monotone of pain

Scarce bearable, yet borne without a sign,  
Guivret said, "I am yolden to thy grace;  
Of the fair fight the victory is thine."  
To which, with mirthless smile, Geraint replied:  
"Thereof hath no man victory. But of grace,  
Guivret the Little, will I freely grant,  
If thou wilt be mine ally, and engage  
To fight against me never, but to bring  
Me succor if thou hearest I have the need."  
"This will I, gladly, lord," answered Guivret;  
So pledged his faith. "And since my name to  
thee  
Is not unknown, right fain would I know thine."  
"Geraint, the son of Erbin," said the prince;  
"Geraint, a name of battles!" said the king;  
"The bearer of the goodly eagle-shield,  
Geraint, the sword of Devon! O my lord,  
Come with me to Penévríc by the Stream,  
Yon castle, which now owns thee for its liege.  
There my two sisters, skilled in surgery,  
Will cure our dolourous wounds." But Geraint said,  
"I thank thee, but I go upon my way."

Then Guivret looked at Enid, where she stood;  
And grieved that one of her so noble mien,  
That one so beautiful, should have such woe.  
And he said to Geraint: "Thy course is  
wrong,

My lord, yea, greatly wrong; if peril rise  
Before thee in thy weakness and thy hurts,  
What prospering canst thou hope?"

But wilfully  
The prince responded, "I have answered thee."  
And though his wounds bled deathfully, and the  
throb

And ache of them was torture, he would do  
Nothing but mount his horse, feutre his lance,  
Abandon his unserviceable shield,  
Bid Enid ride on first, and so depart;  
While in a helpless pity for them both  
Looked after them Guivret the Little King.

But on the highroad Enid and Geraint  
Proceeded till they saw before them lie  
A vast, deep forest. And the afternoon  
Was like the height of summer for the close  
Of stifling, windless heat; and for the blood  
Which covered all his body like a pall,  
The prince's armour cleaved unto his flesh,  
And all his hurts pulsed with the fever-fire.  
Wherefore most cool and grateful looked the  
wood,  
And entering it, they halted in the shade.

As they thus rested, suddenly from the wood  
Shrilled forth a piteous wailing, and the voice



Was of a woman seeming crazed with grief.  
"Lady, do we ride forward," said Geraint,  
"And learn what this betokens." And they  
rode,

Threading the dark, still thickets, and at last  
Came to a grassy glade, wherein they saw  
Two horses standing, one, a knight's destrier,  
The other, a lady's palfrey. There behold,  
Upon the trodden, blood-besprinkled grass,  
His battered helm beside him, prostrate lay  
A young knight in white armour, a mere boy  
With yellow, curling hair, and he was dead.  
And a young maid in a grey riding-dress  
Knelt at his side, her eyes wildered with grief.  
And ever and anon she flung herself  
Upon the dead knight, kissing lips and hair,  
Chafing his hands, beseeching him to speak,  
With such exceeding weeping and such wails  
That it was sorrow both to see and hear;  
And Enid, looking, shuddered, for she thought,  
"A day like this will come also to me!"

"Ah! Lady," queried Prince Geraint in ruth,  
"What hath befallen thee?" "My love is  
slain!"

She moaned in answer; "Without cause is slain!  
We journeyed to the court of King Guivret,  
Where was to be our wedding on the morn;  
But here two villains met us, giants both,

And both at once they set upon my love,  
And without cause they slew him where he lies ! ”  
Then in a generous anger sware Geraint,  
“ Slaying, they shall be slain ! Where are they  
now ? ”

“ They went by yonder path, but he is dead ! ”  
Then fell she to her dolour, and Geraint  
Spake unto Enid : “ Do thou bide with her,  
Enid, for she is like to die of grief.  
And when I have avenged her, I shall come.”

So by the bridle-path he rode away ;  
And Enid in mute terror saw him go,  
Thinking of his great wounds, the giants’  
strength,

Quite certain that he never would return ;  
And smitten by the thought that but for her,  
Even though all unwilling, but for her,  
This hapless quest had never been begun.

And then she looked upon the girl, so young  
And fair and in such sorrow, and her heart  
Was stirred with pity poignant as a pain.  
And she dismounted quickly, went to her,  
Knelt by her, took her in her arms, and kissed  
Her eyes and stroked her hair, and soothed, and  
said

Sweet woman-words of comfort which she felt  
Futile while uttering them. And the girl clung,  
Her face to Enid’s breast, and at the last

Grew very still and silent. "Can she sleep?"  
Mused Enid, but up-turning the white face,  
Drew back in a slow horror, for she slept  
Indeed,— the sleep of death.

Meanwhile Geraint  
Caught sight of the two murderers, and in  
brawn  
And stature they were giants in good truth.  
Each looked to have the strength of two strong  
men,  
Each carried on his shoulder a huge club,  
Knotted, and braced with iron. Crying to  
them,  
"For slaying yonder knight yourselves shall  
die!"  
The prince rushed on them, with his long spear  
thrust  
The nearer through the body that he died.  
But ere he could pluck forth the lance again,  
The other giant struck him with his club,  
Crushing his side and shoulder, that his wounds,  
Partially closed and stanch'd, opened anew  
And from him all his blood began to flow.  
Yet Geraint drew his sword and made attack,  
And gave a blow so violent on the crown  
Of the giant's head that bone and brain were  
split,  
And he fell dead. Then careless that he left

His lance still fixed within his first foe's breast,  
Fainting from loss of blood, with one desire,  
One only, to reach her he loved so well,  
Geraint returned to Enid, where she sat  
Between the dead young lovers, and her eyes  
Brightened at seeing him, but when he came  
Before her, he fell swooning from his horse.

And Enid gave a moaning, stifled cry ;  
And flung herself upon him, calling him,  
Entreating him to speak to her, but Geraint  
Lay in so deep a swoon it seemed his death.  
And then a numbing fear gripped Enid's heart ;  
And though with nerveless fingers she undid  
The buckles of his armour, and laid bare  
The dreadful wounds, and from her hem tore  
strips,  
And wiped the blood away and bound his hurts,  
Ever it seemed to her she did a thing  
Which she had done before, so strong the sense  
Had been upon her of a woe to come.  
And when at last, his head upon her lap  
Placing, she sat and gazed at his dear face,  
She neither wept nor wailed ; her eyes were dry  
And bright as with a fever, and her lips  
Kept whispering just the words, " Dead ?  
Dead, my love ?  
And dead because of me ? " And to and fro  
Her body rocking slightly, thus she sat,

Whispering, "Dead? And dead because of me?"

So waned the afternoon, until the rays  
Of the low sun wrought glory in the glade,  
Kindling to gold the foliage. Then the dusk  
Fell with a chill of autumn. Long before  
Had Enid's palfrey and the lovers' steeds  
Strayed far into the forest; but looking down  
With sorrow almost human in its eyes,  
Like faithfulest of friends, Geraint's destrier  
Remained by Enid quietly. And the dusk  
Deepened to dark, but Enid knew it not —  
Knew neither light nor change to dusk nor dark,  
For to her all was blackness.

But behold,  
Upon a sudden through the forest streamed  
The smoky flare of torches, and the combes  
And alleys of the wood rang with the shouts  
And jests and oaths of fierce and lawless men.  
Then upon steaming horses flecked with foam,  
Into the hollow glade was poured the band  
Of ruffians of the ruffian Earl Limours,  
Returning from a foray, with the spoils  
Of sackage bound about their saddle-bows.  
And in the forefront, on a huge, black horse,  
His shield an empty blackness, and his spear  
Grim with the hue of carnage, rode Limours,  
A man of mighty stature, with a cruel  
And swarthy countenance.

At once the earl  
Saw Enid and rode to her, with an oath  
Saying, "What have we here? A woman lone,  
With dead at either side, and in her lap,  
One who will live not long in any case!"  
Roughly to Enid then, "Does he live yet,  
The one thou holdest?" Dully she replied,  
As if another spake in place of her,  
"I know not, but I fear that he is dead."  
"Who is he?" asked Limours. "A knight and  
prince."  
"And thou — art thou his wife or lady-love?"  
"Both, both," said Enid. Whereupon Limours,  
With a harsh laugh, gave ordering to his men:  
"Quick! Make a sapling-litter for the man  
And carry him to our hall, where we shall learn  
Whether he live or die. And take his steed —  
The horse at least may pay us for our pains.  
As to the two dead bodies, let them lie."  
And then again to Enid: "But as for thee,  
I share with thee my charger. For know well  
A fair face, even though bemarred with grief,  
Is never slighted by the Earl Limours."

Which saying, he had Enid lifted up  
And placed before him on the saddle-cloth;  
While quickly his wild vassals used their brands  
To cut two saplings upon which they laid

Branches crosswise, and on these placed Geraint,

His sword beside him. And in such array  
They journeyed to the stronghold of Limours.

And great and gaunt and menacing was the hall  
They entered, with a floor of naked stone,  
And walls of stone begrimed by smoke and age;  
Hung with fantastic cobwebs etched in soot,  
Hung with old shields and helms, old spears and  
swords,

Eaten away with rust, and tattered flags  
Fretted about the blood-stains,—booty all  
Of ravagings in old years. A fire flamed high  
In a vast, blackened fireplace; torches set  
In rusted iron burned fitfully; down the room,  
Ranged in long rows, were tables and their  
banks  
Of bare, unfinished boards.

And upon these  
The followers of Limours flung down the fruits  
Of the day's foray — glittering, costly heaps:  
Hauberks of silver mail, and helms and greaves  
Inlaid with gold, and swords with jewelléd hilts;  
Much silver plate, beakers and cups of gold,  
Hanaps adorned with gems; and spurs and bits,  
All of fine gold; and piles of various coins;  
And surcoats of green satin, women's gowns  
Of scarlet lined with minever, kirtles blue,

And mantles furred with ermine; while of rings,  
Girdles and carcanets of twisted gold  
And many gem-encrusted, such a sum  
That onerous were the counting. Then the  
    earl

Made the apportionment, to every man  
Gave what he deemed was rightful, silencing  
Any half-muttered word of discontent  
With curses and with blows of his mailed hand;  
And that which was the largest share and best  
He for himself reserved.

    Then Prince Geraint,  
Still in his swoon upon the leafy bier,  
Limours caused to be placed upon a couch  
In the center of the hall, and Enid sat  
Beside him on a low bench, with her arms  
Stretched over him, her cheek against his hand;  
And neither did she weep nor did she wail.

And Limours doffed his armour, and his men  
Did likewise, and a shout rose for the feast.  
So entered kitchen-fellows, on huge trays  
Bearing whole wild boars roasted, bullock's  
    flesh,  
Bittern and other fowl; and casks of wine  
Were rolled into the hall; the tables set  
With trenchers and with flagons and with  
    cups —



A table-service of which some was wood,  
And much was silver, ay, and part was gold.  
And then in flaunting garments tricked with  
jewels  
Too many, and with jangling chains of gold,  
A throng of women came into the hall,  
The wantons of the earl and of his men.  
And all sat down together to the feast,  
And ate and drank, and presently the talk  
Grew fast and boisterous, the jesting broad,  
The laughter gross, and always some would  
raise  
Snatches of shameless songs.

But Earl Limours,  
With scarce a taste of food or sip of wine,  
Pushed cup and platter from him; moodily  
And with a dangerous lowering of brows  
Sat, with his eyes on Enid; and at last  
He rose and went to her, and seized her arm,  
And pulled her to her feet, and spake to her:

“Why dost thou grieve for him? If he be dead,  
Will thy dole give him life? And if he live,  
It matters not — he were as dead to thee.  
For I have set my heart on having thee,  
And I *will* have thee, not by any man  
Living or dead, be barred from my desire.

Why starest thou so? The change is good  
enough,—

God knows, all to thy vantaging. Thou hast  
seen

What riches one day brings me; I have lands  
And vassals who obey me to the death.

And riches, lands and vassals shall be thine.

So! Droop no more! I have no taste for  
grief.

It is my pleasure that my women smile;  
Remember that!"

And going to the heap  
Of pillage that was his, he plucked a robe  
Of scarlet damask from it, and returned  
And thrust it towards her: "Go, and doff thy  
rags,

And clothe thee in this dress and come to me!"

But Enid, shaken from her apathy

By his discourteousness, stood white and  
straight

And resolute before him, answering him,

"My lord commanded me to wear this gown;

And till his will be changed, I wear it still."

And the earl flushed with anger, and his brows

Drew to a savage scowl; yet with his wrath

Unwilling admiration he must mix

For her defiance of him, in his power

Completely as she was. Never before  
Had he known woman who could dare so much.  
A moment he stood speechless ; then he turned  
And drew her to the table, forced her down  
Into the seat by his, and pushed a plate  
Of steaming meat before her and he said,  
“ I will forbear this once ; but eat with me.”

But Enid said: “ Till yon pale man arise  
And part the plate with me, I will not eat.”  
Raging, Lamours replied: “ A fool art thou!  
Yon man is dead already. What avail  
To take a vow that can not be fulfilled?  
Is thy wit weak? I warn thee, have a care,  
Lest I be angered from my gentleness,  
And teach thee what it means to disobey.  
Once more will I forbear ; but drink with me.”

But Enid pushed the heavy cup of gold,  
Studded with rubies, with a red wine brimmed,  
From her and said, “ Till yon still man arise  
And part the cup with me, I will not drink.”

Then in a crimson fury, with the veins  
Knotting upon his forehead, the black earl  
Sprang from the bench, and with a grip that  
    pained  
Caught Enid by the shoulder, held her fast  
At arm's length, raised his hand, crying aloud,

“As well may I be rough as gentle with thee!”  
But when he made to strike, of his men one  
Who had been born to nobler circumstance,  
Remembering her he loved in that far youth,  
Ere riot blasted him, arose and ran  
And interposed himself before Limours,  
Sheltering Enid. “It were better, lord,”  
He said, “to use her gently. She is fair,  
Womanly with a perfect womanhood.”

But the earl, answering not, drew back a step,  
Snatched up the massy hanap, poised it high,  
Hurled it with fatal certainty of aim,—  
It struck the liegeman’s temple and he reeled,  
Groped with unsteady hand, then with a sigh  
Sank in the pool of spilt wine and of blood  
From the cut oozing, writhed once, and was  
still.

Then even that brutal fellowship was stirred  
To a dull anger ’gainst the murderer;  
And dark looks were passed slowly down the  
board,  
And all at once the feast came to an end;  
And in the ghastly silence one who well  
Had loved the slain man, sobbed — and caught  
her breath  
Suddenly in sharp fear, and tried to smile,  
Finding Limours’ eyes on her. And Limours,

Feeling the gathering menace of his men,  
Maddened the more, and as if demon-driven  
He drew to Enid, saying, "Learnest thou well  
How they who cross me fare! And as with him,  
Why not with thee?" and struck her in the face  
With heavy hand!

And not so much the blow  
It was as the mind-desolating thought,  
"He had not dared, saving my lord *is* dead!"  
That forced a cry from Enid, loud and shrill,  
Wailing and vibrant through the echoing hall,—  
The cry of one for whom all things are done.

But in the black abysses of his swoon  
Prince Geraint heard, and struggled towards  
the cry;  
Battled through sheer eternities, it seemed,  
With seething, formless horrors, some that  
mowed,  
Some yelling voicelessly — an offspring all  
Of consciousness returning — and at last  
Leaped from the couch, and the great, lighted  
hall  
Burst on his vision and the savage earl,  
And the dead man prone in the wine and blood,  
And Enid trembling from the blow, and pale  
As palest death. And Geraint seized his sword  
And rushed upon Limours, and with one blow

Struck head from body, and all they that sat  
About the board, upstarting, fled from him,  
Their faces ashen at the sight they saw,  
Shrieking, "It is the dead man!" And the hall  
Cleared in a moment of all enemies.

And Geraint folded Enid in his arms,  
Kissing her on the throat and lips and hair;  
And clasped the face he loved in yearning hands,  
And clasped her body in poor, faltering hands,  
And knelt and pressed his cheek against her  
gown,  
Kissing the robe's thin tatters, all the while  
Whispering, "O Belovéd, what am I?  
O dear my love, how have I treated thee!  
O dear beyond all words, how dealt with thee!  
Forgive, forgive!"

But Enid saw alone  
How shuddering fits of weakness mastered him,  
How his hands quivered brokenly, and her fear  
For him was such she could not say a word  
Of love or any comforting — naught but this:  
"Go, go, my lord! Go, ere they come again!  
Geraint, go ere they slay thee!"

Then he rose:  
"Come, we shall go together;" and they passed  
Into the courtyard, where Geraint's destrier

Stood saddled still and bridled. And Geraint  
Mounted and drew up Enid, and she sat  
Behind him with her arms about his waist.  
And none came forth to hinder their escape,  
When from the grim hall of the grim Limours  
Rapidly through the night they rode away ;  
And a sweet wind was hurrying o'er the world,  
And wreathed in wisp-like clouds the moon was  
sheen.

And Geraint said: " Belovéd, shall we ride  
Unto a brighter world and fairer life,—  
Ay, fairer for the weight of lifted woe?  
I love thee ; I have wronged thee ; all my vows —  
To cherish thee with such exceeding care,  
To prove me not unworthy of thy love —  
I brake them all, in all am I forsworn.  
And yet forgive me, Enid, whom I love  
So very, very well." And tenderly  
She forward bent and kissed him as they rode ;  
And Love was come again to his high place,  
And in two hearts was joyance at the last.

So they fared onward by a grassy way  
Between two hawthorn-hedges, and the night  
Was like a web of silver on the land.  
But lo, before them, sharp against the sky  
They saw the points of lances, heard the noise  
Of an approaching host. Then Prince Geraint,

Checking his charger, said: "Who these may be,

I know not; but dismount, Enid, and hide  
In yonder deepest shadow of the hedge,  
Where they may not perceive thee." But she  
wept

And clung to him in anguish: "O my love,  
So weak and wounded, without lance or shield,  
How wilt thou make a stand against these men?  
Let me stay with thee and thy lot be mine!"  
"Nay," he replied, "I pray thee by our love,  
Enid, to hide." And lest he suffer more,  
She did as he would have her.

Then behold,  
Armed in full armour, with long spear in rest,  
Upon a powerful, rushing steed, a knight  
Forthissued from the host against Geraint.  
And Enid saw, and seeing had such dole  
As might not be contained, and she ran out  
To meet the galloping steed, and wildly cried,  
"O knight, eternal shame be thy reward  
Slaying a man forwounded!" But the knight,  
Reining his horse so sharply that it hurled  
Back on its haunches, answered, "Do I see  
Geraint's fair lady?" "Ah, but thou?" she  
said —

And then the moonfire showed upon his shield  
The argent lion of the Little King,



Guivret, their friend and ally.

And Guivret,  
Lightly dismounting, knelt and kissed her hand,  
Then ran to Prince Geraint, saying, "My lord,  
If I had slain thee, grief had been my death.  
I came to bring thee help if there was need.  
For after that I saw thee ride away  
This undertide, and went back to my towers,  
Ever must I be thinking of thy wounds,  
Thy lady's wondrous beauty, and the lands  
Perilous of the evil Earl Limours.  
I could not rest from thinking, and I rose  
To call my thousand knights and men-at-  
arms —"

"And wounded as thou wert," brake in Geraint,  
"To bring to me the help I greatly need.

Ah, friend, *thine* oath was more than empty  
words!"

"Lord," said the Little King, "I am thy man,  
And love is there between us, as I hope.

And now I say again what I have said:

Come with me to my castle and be healed,

For grievous are thy hurts. And if not they

May move thee, then have pity on thy wife,

So worn, so dolour-stricken. For her sake

Come where she may have comfort. On the  
morn

We celebrate a wedding in our hall;

Joyance and cheer and chime of marriage-bell  
Will make the world grow winsomer to you  
both."

But Enid, when she heard him, called to mind  
The young dead lovers lying in the glade,  
And understood and grieving told him all.  
And King Guivret wept bitterly and he said:  
"Cadoc of Tabriol, my sister's son,  
Just issued from his squireship! Brave and  
true,  
A good knight he had proved. And sweet  
Yglais,  
His bride that should have been — so young and  
fair!  
And they are dead! The wedding-wine is  
mulled,  
The hall is strown for bridals. They are dead!  
And we must toll the bells to other tune.  
And yet, my lady and my lord Geraint,  
Though mourning fills our chambers, will ye  
come  
And find repose and healing for your hurts?"  
"Fair friend," replied Geraint, "we thank thee;  
yea."

Then caused the king two litters to be made  
Of tree-boughs, covered with soft grass and  
silks,

And on the one placed Enid, and Geraint  
Upon the other. And the morning-grey  
Revealed to them the castle by the stream,  
High-towered Penévríc, where in robes right rich  
And all of luxury, they lodged full well;  
And where the sisters, skilled in surgery,  
Used every art to cure the prince's wounds.

And such was their unfailing craft and care,  
That when a month was ended, strong and well  
And vigorous of manhood was Geraint.  
Then joy returned to Enid, and with joy  
Rose-red of cheek, and golden sheen of hair,  
And in her eyes the shining of a light.  
And happiness gave to her such a grace,  
So wonder-working and so excellent  
That where she was there all was beautiful —  
Ay, that which had been never; and all men,  
Beholding her fair nobleness and charm,  
Were minded to gaze long, lest when she pass  
All beauteousness go with her. And Geraint  
Had in his heart a love past any speech.

But naught of traitor was there in this love,  
As had been in the old. From this should  
spring  
Not slothfulness, dishonourable ease,  
Indifference to his duties as a prince,  
A people's disaffection, the dark slime

Of slanders that ere long must change to truths,  
But action, honour on the field of arms,  
Fair duties fairly done, all knightlihood,  
A people's reverence for a worthy lord,  
And wide, yet wider fame. For in those days  
Of health restored, when Enid and Geraint  
Re-entered into that companionship  
And unison of spirit which they prized  
Above all other good, and which had been  
So long denied them by their own distrust,  
Misunderstandings, doubts and unshared griefs,  
Then frankly each to other told a tale:  
Enid, of her unwillingness to speak  
And tell him how the people scoffed at him  
As given up to luxury, and content;  
Geraint, of his ignoble doubts of her,  
Of how the evil words of Honolan  
Had closed with hers so fatefully on that morn.  
And then he said: "Yet, Enid, all the while  
I knew that he had lied; and all the while  
It was upon me I should cast me down  
And cry forgiveness that I wronged thee so;  
But such a storm of wrath and shame and pride  
Possessed me that all gentlehood was stilled.  
And, Enid, what a poor thing was my pride!  
My pride, which took no reck of periling thee!  
My pride, wherein was neither reasoning  
Nor courtesy nor any knightliness!  
It was my master; yet at best it was

Only the wilful passion of a child!  
And well-nigh it brought ruin to us both."

But Enid, looking on him with clear eyes  
A little grave with tenderness, replied:  
"O knight of mine, the past is past indeed.  
The Mansions of To-morrow are so fair!  
Therein shall we dwell always, with us, Love,  
Kinglier-souled that he is learn'd of Pain.  
True lover and true knight, I love thee well!"

So with Guivret the Little they abode  
A fortnight and a month, and found him frank,  
And ever faultless in his courtesy.  
But then they fell to longing for their home,  
The pleasant land of Devon, where should be  
A life the fairer for the lifted woe,  
A love the greater that it had been tried,  
Proved in the furnace-fires of stress and strife.  
Wherefore they spake their purpose to Guivret;  
And though for his own sake he much desired  
Their tarriance still, of five score knights he  
formed  
A retinue befitting, and with such train  
Geraint and Enid rode to their own realm.

And heart-deep was the welcome which they had  
From Erbin who had feared that they were dead,  
And when they came before him, wept with joy.

And wide rejoicing made he in his court.  
Then, though at Enid's gentle word, Geraint  
Spared to Sir Honolan his evil life,  
He banished him to shores beyond the seas.

And in the years that followed all was well.  
Never did Prince Geraint again decline  
To aught that was unworthy; steadfast, brave,  
Tireless in quest of honour, a true knight  
He was in all ways knightly, and the tongues  
Which once had scoffed, spake nothing but his  
praise,  
And praise of her with whom he had such love,  
Enid, so very fair and very leal.  
And when the good King Erbin was no more,  
Unto Geraint and Enid passed the crown  
Of Devon, and a king and queen were they,  
To Arthur tributary, but paramount  
In their own land. And king and queen they  
lived  
And loved, until transformed to deathless names.

## AFTERWORD

So hath the fair old history an end.  
And yet, I pray you, gentles, linger still  
And hear the song which folk say Alarin  
Made when he dwelt in Faerie. For of him,  
The story goes that Enid and Geraint  
Had been in Devon at King Erbin's call  
Hardly a twelvemonth, when from Arthur's court  
He went away, and no man saw him more;  
And wise folk say he sought, and seeking found,  
The Country of the Clearness, Faeryland.

And the chief harper to the faery-king  
He was, and ware the potent crown of joy;  
Beheld the walls of beryl and the towers  
Of amethyst and loadstone, heard the plash  
Of waters Avalonian where the cups  
Of lilies mould a margin to their flow,  
And saw the stars wet with the faery sea.

And yet he made a small song, even this:

“ Here, to suspended music, the slow hours  
Turn neither east nor west their golden ball;  
And here, by wind-blown fountains, are the flowers  
Which never fall.

“ Ah, but what profit of the sovran day?  
What profit of this immortality,  
If still remembrance and its fret must fray  
Unceasingly?

“ Here is the light whose sumless levels foam  
Like billows crescent to a crystal strand —  
Serenities celestial — and they dome  
A changeless land.

“ Ah, but what comfort in such clarity?  
What soul in such placidity of grace? —  
Ah, but the light which never lived for me  
Upon *her* face!”

















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